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E. J. Read

THE

LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

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VOLUME III.

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THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARCHDEACON GOES TO FRAMLEY.

By some of those unseen telegraphic wires which carry news about the country and make no charge for the conveyance, Archdeacon Grantly heard that his son the major was at Framley. Now in that itself there would have been nothing singular. There had been for years much intimacy between the Lufton family and the Grantly family,—so much that an alliance between the two houses had once been planned, the elders having considered it expedient that the young lord should marry that Griselda who had since mounted higher in the world even than the elders had then projected for her. There had come no such alliance; but the intimacy had not ceased, and there was nothing in itself surprising in the fact that Major Grantly should be staying at Framley Court. But the archdeacon, when he heard the news, bethought him at once of Grace Crawley. Could it be possible that his old friend Lady Lufton,—Lady Lufton, whom he

had known and trusted all his life, whom he had ever regarded as a pillar of the church in Barsetshire,—should now be untrue to him in a matter so closely affecting his interests? Men when they are worried by fears and teased by adverse circumstances become suspicious of those on whom suspicion should never rest. It was hardly possible, the archdeacon thought, that Lady Lufton should treat him so unworthily,—but the circumstances were strong against his friend. Lady Lufton had induced Miss Crawley to go to Framley, much against his advice; at a time when such a visit seemed to him to be very improper; and it now appeared that his son was to be there at the same time, —a fact of which Lady Lufton had made no mention to him whatever. Why had not Lady Lufton told him that Henry Grantly was coming to Framley Court? The reader, whose interest in the matter will be less keen than was the archdeacon's, will know very well why Lady Lufton had said nothing about the major's visit. The reader will remember that Lady Lufton, when she saw the archdeacon, was as ignorant as to the intended visit as was the archdeacon himself. But the archdeacon was uneasy, troubled, and suspicious;—and he suspected his old friend unworthily.

He spoke to his wife about it within a very few hours of the arrival of the tidings by those invisible wires. He had already told her that Miss Crawley was to go to Framley Parsonage, and that he thought that Mrs. Robarts was wrong to receive her at such a time. "It is only intended for good-nature," Mrs. Grantly had said. "It is misplaced good-nature at the present moment," the archdeacon had replied. Mrs. Grantly had not thought it worth her while to under-

take at the moment any strong defence of the Framley people. She knew well how odious was the name of Crawley in her husband's ears, and she felt that the less that was said at present about the Crawleys the better for the peace of the rectory at Plumstead. She had therefore allowed the expression of his disapproval to pass unchallenged. But now he came upon her with a more bitter grievance, and she was obliged to argue the matter with him.

"What do you think?" said he. "Henry is at Framley."

"He can hardly be staying there," said Mrs. Grantly, "because I know that he is so very busy at home." The business at home of which the major's mother was speaking was his projected moving from Cosby Lodge, a subject which was also very odious to the archdeacon. He did not wish his son to move from Cosby Lodge. He could not endure the idea that his son should be known throughout the county to be giving up a residence because he could not afford to keep it. The archdeacon could have afforded to keep up two Cosby Lodges for his son, and would have been well pleased to do so, if only his son would not misbehave against him so shamefully! He could not bear that his son should be punished, openly, before the eyes of all Barsetshire. Indeed, he did not wish that his son should be punished at all. He simply desired that his son should recognise his father's power to inflict punishment. It would be henbane to Archdeacon Grantly to have a poor son,—a son living at Pau,—among Frenchmen,—because he could not afford to live in England! Why had the archdeacon been careful of his money, adding house to house and field to field?

He himself was contented,—so he told himself,—to die as he had lived in a country parsonage, working with the collar round his neck up to the day of his death, if God would allow him so to do. He was ambitious of no grandeur for himself. So he would tell himself,—being partly oblivious of certain episodes in his own life. All his wealth had been got together for his children. He desired that his sons should be fitting brothers for their august sister. And now the son who was nearest to him, whom he was bent upon making a squire in his own county, wanted to marry the daughter of a man who had stolen twenty pounds, and when objection was made to so discreditable a connection, replied by packing up all his things and saying that he would go and live—at Pau! The archdeacon therefore did not like to hear of his son being busy at home.

"I don't know whether he 's busy or not," said the archdeacon, "but I tell you he is staying at Framley."

"From whom have you heard it?"

"What matter does that make if it is so? I heard it from Flurry."

"Flurry may have been mistaken," said Mrs. Grantly.

"It is not at all likely. Those people always know about such things. He heard it from the Framley keeper. I don't doubt but it 's true, and I think that it 's a great shame."

"A great shame that Henry should be at Framley! He has been there two or three times every year since he has lived in the county."

"It is a great shame that he should be had over there just at the time when that girl is there also. It

is impossible to believe that such a thing is an accident."

"But, archdeacon, you do not mean to say that you think that Lady Lufton has arranged it?"

"I don't know who has arranged it. Somebody has arranged it. If it is Robarts, that is almost worse. One could forgive a woman in such a matter better than one could a man."

"Psha!" Mrs. Grantly's temper was never bitter, but at this moment it was not sweetened by her husband's very uncivil reference to her sex. "The whole idea is nonsense, and you should get it out of your head."

"Am I to get it out of my head that Henry wants to make this girl his wife, and that the two are at this moment at Framley together?" In this the archdeacon was wrong as to his facts. Major Grantly had left Framley on the previous day, having stayed there only one night. "It is coming to that that one can trust no one,—no one,—literally no one." Mrs. Grantly perfectly understood that the archdeacon, in the agony of the moment, intended to exclude even herself from his confidence by that "no one;" but to this she was indifferent, understanding accurately when his words should be accepted as expressing his thoughts, and when they should be supposed to express only his anger.

"The probability is that no one at Lufton knew anything about Henry's partiality for Miss Crawley," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I tell you I think they are both at Framley together."

"And I tell you that if they are, which I doubt, they

are there simply by an accident. Besides, what does it matter? If they choose to marry each other, you and I cannot prevent them. They don't want any assistance from Lady Lufton, or anybody else. They have simply got to make up their own minds, and then no one can hinder them."

"And, therefore, you would like to see them brought together?"

"I say nothing about that, archdeacon; but I do say that we must take these things as they come. What can we do? Henry may go and stay with Lady Lufton if he pleases. You and I cannot prevent him."

After this the achdeacon walked away, and would not argue the matter any further with his wife at that moment. He knew very well that he could not conquer her, and was apt at such moments to think that she took an unfair advantage of him by keeping her temper. But he could not get out of his head the idea that perhaps on this very day things were being arranged between his son and Grace Crawley at Framley; and he resolved that he himself would go over and see what might be done. He would, at any rate, tell all his trouble to Lady Lufton, and beg his old friend to assist him. He could not think that such an one as he had always known Lady Lufton to be would approve of a marriage between Henry Grantly and Grace Crawley. At any rate, he would learn the truth. He had once been told that Grace Crawley had herself refused to marry his son, feeling that she would do wrong to inflict so great an injury upon any gentleman. He had not believed in so great a virtue. He could not believe in it now,—now, when he heard that Miss Crawley and his son were staying together in the same

parish. Somebody must be doing him an injury. It could hardly be chance. But his presence at Framley might even yet have a good effect, and he would at least learn the truth. So he had himself driven to Barchester, and from Barchester he took post horses to Framley.

As he came near to the village, he grew to be somewhat ashamed of himself, or, at least, nervous as to the mode in which he would proceed. The driver, turning round to him, had suggested that he supposed he was to drive to "my lady's." This injustice to Lord Lufton, to whom the house belonged, and with whom his mother lived as a guest, was very common in the county; for old Lady Lufton had lived at Framley Court through her son's long minority, and had kept the house there till his marriage; and even since his marriage she had been recognised as its presiding genius. It certainly was not the fault of old Lady Lufton, as she always spoke of everything as belonging either to her son or to her daughter-in-law. The archdeacon had been in doubt as to whether he would go to the Court or to the parsonage. Could he have done exactly as he wished, he would have left the chaise and walked to the parsonage, so as to reach it without the noise and fuss incidental to a postilion's arrival. But that was impossible. He could not drop into Framley as though he had come from the clouds, and, therefore, he told the man to do as he had suggested. "To my lady's?" said the postilion. The archdeacon assented, and the man, with loud cracks of his whip, and with a spasmodic gallop along the short avenue, took the archdeacon up to the door of Lord Lufton's house. He asked for Lord Lufton first, putting on his pleas-

antest smile, so that the servant should not suspect the purpose, of which he was somewhat ashamed. Was Lord Lufton at home? Lord Lufton was not at home. Lord Lufton had gone up to London that morning, intending to return the day after to-morrow; but both "my ladies" were at home. So the archdeacon was shown into the room where both "my ladies" were sitting,—and with them he found Mrs. Robarts. Any one who had become acquainted with the habits of the Framley ladies would have known that this might very probably be the case. The archdeacon himself was as well aware as any one of the modes of life at Framley. The lord's wife was the parson's sister, and the parson's wife had from her infancy been the petted friend of the old lady. Of course they all lived very much together. Of course Mrs. Robarts was as much at home in the drawing-room of Framley Court as she was in her own drawing-room at the parsonage. Nevertheless, the archdeacon thought himself to be hardly used when he found that Mrs. Robarts was at the house.

"My dear archdeacon, who ever expected to see you?" said old Lady Lufton. Then the two younger women greeted him. And they all smiled on him pleasantly, and seemed overjoyed to see him. He was, in truth, a great favourite at Framley, and each of the three was glad to welcome him. They believed in the archdeacon at Framley, and felt for him that sort of love which ladies in the country do feel for their elderly male friends. There was not one of the three who would not have taken much trouble to get anything for the archdeacon which they had thought the archdeacon would like. Even old Lady Lufton remembered what was his favourite soup, and always took

care that he should have it when he dined at the Court. Young Lady Lufton would bring his tea to him as he sat in his chair. He was petted in the house, was allowed to poke the fire if he pleased, and called the servants by their names as though he were at home. He was compelled, therefore, to smile and to seem pleased; and it was not till after he had eaten his lunch, and had declared that he must return home to dinner, that the dowager gave him an opportunity of having the private conversation which he desired.

"Can I have a few minutes' talk with you?" he said to her, whispering into her ear as they left the drawing-room together. So she led the way into her own sitting-room, telling him, as she asked him to be seated, that she had supposed that something special must have brought him over to Framley. "I should have asked you to come up here, even if you had not spoken," she said.

"Then perhaps you know what has brought me over?" said the archdeacon.

"Not in the least," said Lady Lufton. "I have not an idea. But I did not flatter myself that you would come so far on a morning call, merely to see us three ladies. I hope you did not want to see Ludovic, because he will not be back till to-morrow."

"I wanted to see you, Lady Lufton."

"That is lucky, as here I am. You may be pretty sure to find me here any day in the year."

After this there was a little pause. The archdeacon hardly knew how to begin his story. In the first place he was in doubt whether Lady Lufton had ever heard of the preposterous match which his son had proposed to himself to make. In his anger at Plumstead he had

felt sure that she knew all about it, and that she was assisting his son. But this belief had dwindled as his anger had dwindled; and as the chaise had entered the parish of Framley he had told himself that it was quite impossible that she should know anything about it. Her manner had certainly been altogether in her favour since he had been in her house. There had been nothing of the consciousness of guilt in her demeanour. But, nevertheless, there was the coincidence! How had it come to pass that Grace Crawley and his son should be at Framley together? It might, indeed, be just possible that Flurry might have been wrong, and that his son had not been there at all.

"I suppose Miss Crawley is at the parsonage?" he said at last.

"Oh, yes; she is still there, and will remain there, I should think, for the next ten days."

"Oh; I did not know," said the archdeacon, very coldly.

It seemed to Lady Lufton, who was as innocent as an unborn babe in the matter of the projected marriage, that her old friend the archdeacon was in a mind to persecute the Crawleys. He had on a former occasion taken upon himself to advise that Grace Crawley should not be entertained at Framley, and now it seemed that he had come all the way from Plumstead to say something further in the same strain. Lady Lufton, if he had anything further to say of that kind, would listen to him as a matter of course. She would listen and reply to him without temper. But she did not approve of it. She told herself silently that she could not approve of persecution or of interference. She therefore drew herself up, and pursed her mouth,

and put on something of that look of severity which she could assume very visibly, if it so pleased her. "Yes; she is still there, and I think that her visit will do her a great deal of good," said Lady Lufton.

"When we talk of doing good to people," said the archdeacon, "we often make terrible mistakes. It so often happens that we don't know when we are doing good and when we are doing harm."

"That is true, of course, Dr. Grantly, and must be so necessarily, as our wisdom here below is so very limited. But I should think,—as far as I can see, that is,—that the kindness which my friend Mrs. Robarts is showing to this young lady must be beneficial. You know, archdeacon, I explained to you before that I could not quite agree with you in what you said as to leaving these people alone till after the trial. I thought that help was necessary to them at once."

The archdeacon sighed deeply. He ought to have been somewhat renovated in spirit by the tone in which Lady Lufton spoke to him, as it conveyed to him almost an absolute conviction that his first suspicion was incorrect. But any comfort which might have come to him from this source was marred by the feeling that he must announce his own disgrace. At any rate he must do so, unless he were contented to go back to Plumstead without having learned anything by his journey. He changed the tone of his voice, however, and asked a question,—as it might be altogether on a different subject. "I heard yesterday," he said, "that Henry was over here."

"He was here yesterday. He came the evening before, and dined and slept here, and went home yesterday morning."

"Was Miss Crawley with you that evening?"

"Miss Crawley? No; she would not come. She thinks it best not to go out while her father is in his present unfortunate position. And she is right."

"She is quite right in that," said the archdeacon; and then he paused again. He thought that it would be best for him to make a clean breast of it, and to trust to Lady Lufton's sympathy. "Did Henry go up to the parsonage?" he asked.

But still Lady Lufton did not suspect the truth. "I think he did," she replied, with an air of surprise. "I think I heard that he went up there to call on Mrs. Robarts after breakfast."

"No, Lady Lufton, he did not go up there to call on Mrs. Robarts. He went up there because he is making a fool of himself about that Miss Crawley. That is the truth. Now you understand it all. I hope that Mrs. Robarts does not know it. I do hope for her own sake that Mrs. Robarts does not know it."

The archdeacon certainly had no longer any doubt as to Lady Lufton's innocence when he looked at her face as she heard these tidings. She had predicted that Grace Crawley would "make havoc," and could not, therefore, be altogether surprised at the idea that some gentleman should have fallen in love with her; but she had never supposed that the havoc might be made so early in her days, or on so great a quarry. "You don't mean to tell me that Henry Grantly is in love with Grace Crawley?" she replied.

"I mean to say that he says he is."

"Dear, dear, dear! I 'm sure, archdeacon, that you will believe me when I say that I knew nothing about it."

"I 'm quite sure of that," said the archdeacon, dolefully.

"Or I certainly should not have been glad to see him here. But the house, you know, is not mine, Dr. Grantly. I could have done nothing if I had known it. But only to think——! Well, to be sure. She has not lost time, at any rate."

Now this was not at all the light in which the archdeacon wished that the matter should be regarded. He had been desirous that Lady Lufton should be horror-stricken by the tidings, but it seemed to him that she regarded the iniquity almost as a good joke. What did it matter how young or how old the girl might be? She came of poor people,—of people who had no friends,—of disgraced people; and Lady Lufton ought to feel that such a marriage would be a terrible misfortune and a terrible crime. "I need hardly tell you, Lady Lufton," said the archdeacon, "that I shall set my face against it as far as it is in my power to do so."

"If they both be resolved I suppose you can hardly prevent it."

"Of course I cannot prevent it. Of course I cannot prevent it. If he will break my heart and his mother's,—and his sister's,—of course I cannot prevent it. If he will ruin himself, he must have his own way."

"Ruin himself, Dr. Grantly!"

"They will have enough to live upon,—somewhere in Spain or France." The scorn expressed in the archdeacon's voice as he spoke of Pau as being "somewhere in Spain or France," should have been heard to be understood. "No doubt they will have enough to live upon."

"Do you mean to say that it will make a difference as to your own property, Dr. Grantly?"

"Certainly it will, Lady Lufton. I told Henry when I first heard of the thing,—before he had definitely made any offer to the girl,—that I should withdraw from him altogether the allowance that I now make him, if he married her. And I told him also, that if he persisted in his folly I should think it my duty to alter my will."

"I am sorry for that, Dr. Grantly."

"Sorry! And am not I sorry? Sorrow is no sufficient word. I am broken-hearted. Lady Lufton, it is killing me. It is indeed. I love him; I love him;—I love him as you have loved your son. But what is the use? What can he be to me when he shall have married the daughter of such a man as that?"

Lady Lufton sat for a while silent, thinking of a certain episode in her own life. There had been a time when her son was desirous of making a marriage which she had thought would break her heart. She had for a time moved heaven and earth,—as far as she knew how to move them,—to prevent the marriage. But at last she had yielded,—not from lack of power, for the circumstances had been such that at the moment of yielding she had still the power in her hand of staying the marriage;—but she had yielded because she had perceived that her son was in earnest. She had yielded, and had kissed the dust; but from the moment in which her lips had so touched the ground, she had taken great joy in the new daughter whom her son had brought into the house. Since that she had learned to think that young people might perhaps be right, and that old people might perhaps be wrong.

This trouble of her friend the archdeacon's was very like her own old trouble. "And he is engaged to her now?" she said, when those thoughts had passed through her mind.

"Yes;—that is, no. I am not sure. I do not know how to make myself sure."

"I am sure Major Grantly will tell you all the truth as it exists."

"Yes; he 'll tell me the truth,—as far as he knows it. I do not see that there is much anxiety to spare me in the matter. He is desirous rather of making me understand that I have no power of saving him from his own folly. Of course I have no power of saving him."

"But he is engaged to her?"

"He says that she has refused him. But of course that means nothing."

Again the archdeacon's position was very like Lady Lufton's position, as it had existed before her son's marriage. In that case also the young lady, who was now Lady Lufton's own daughter and dearest friend, had refused the lover who proposed to her, although the marriage was so much to her advantage,—loving him, too, the while, with her whole heart, as it was natural to suppose that Grace Crawley might so love her lover. The more she thought of the similarity of the stories, the stronger were her sympathies on the side of poor Grace. Nevertheless, she would comfort her old friend if she knew how; and of course she could not but admit to herself that the match was one which must be a cause of real sorrow to him. "I don't know why her refusal should mean nothing," said Lady Lufton.

"Of course a girl refuses at first,—a girl, I mean, in such circumstances as hers. She can't but feel that more is offered to her than she ought to take, and that she is bound to go through the ceremony of declining. But my anger is not with her, Lady Lufton."

"I do not see how it can be."

"No; it is not with her. If she becomes his wife I trust that I may never see her."

"Oh, Dr. Grantly!"

"I do; I do. How can it be otherwise with me? But I shall have no quarrel with her. With him I must quarrel."

"I do not see why," said Lady Lufton.

"You do not? Does he not set me at defiance?"

"At his age surely a son has a right to marry as he pleases."

"If he took her out of the streets, then, it would be the same?" said the archdeacon with bitter anger.

"No;—for such a one would herself be bad."

"Or if she were the daughter of a huckster out of the city?"

"No again;—for in that case her want of education would probably unfit her for your society."

"Her father's disgrace, then, should be a matter of indifference to me, Lady Lufton?"

"I did not say so. In the first place, her father is not disgraced,—not as yet; and we do not know whether he may ever be disgraced. You will hardly be disposed to say that persecution from the palace disgraces a clergyman in Barsetshire."

"All the same, I believe that the man was guilty," said the archdeacon.

"Wait and see, my friend, before you condemn him

altogether. But, be that as it may, I acknowledge that the marriage is one which must naturally be distasteful to you."

"Oh, Lady Lufton! if you only knew! If you only knew!"

"I do know; and I feel for you. But I think that your son has a right to expect that you should not show the same repugnance to such a marriage as this as you would have had a right to show had he suggested to himself such a wife as those at which you just now hinted. Of course you can advise him, and make him understand your feelings; but I cannot think you will be justified in quarrelling with him, or in changing your views towards him as regards money, seeing that Miss Crawley is an educated lady, who has done nothing to forfeit your respect." A heavy cloud came upon the archdeacon's brow as he heard these words, but he did not make any immediate answer. "Of course, my friend," continued Lady Lufton, "I should not have ventured to say so much to you, had you not come to me, as it were, for my opinion."

"I came here because I thought Henry was here," said the archdeacon.

"If I have said too much I beg your pardon."

"No; you have not said too much. It is not that. You and I are such old friends that either may say almost anything to the other."

"Yes;—just so. And therefore I have ventured to speak my mind," said Lady Lufton.

"Of course;—and I am obliged to you. But, Lady Lufton, you do not understand yet how this hits me. Everything in life that I have done, I have done for my children. I am wealthy, but I have not used my

wealth for myself, because I have desired that they should be able to hold their heads high in the world. All my ambition has been for them, and all the pleasure which I have anticipated for myself in my old age is that which I have hoped to receive from their credit. As for Henry, he might have had anything he wanted from me in the way of money. He expressed a wish, a few months since, to go into Parliament, and I promised to help him as far as ever I could go. I have kept up the game altogether for him. He, the younger son of a working parish parson, has had everything that could be given to the eldest son of a country gentleman,—more than is given to the eldest son of many a peer. I have hoped that he would marry again, but I have never cared that he should marry for money. I have been willing to do everything for him myself. But, Lady Lufton, a father does feel that he should have some return for all this. No one can imagine that Henry ever supposed that a bride from that wretched place at Hogglestock could be welcomed among us. He knew that he would break our hearts, and he did not care for it. That is what I feel. Of course he has the power to do as he likes;—and of course I have the power to do as I like also with what is my own."

Lady Lufton was a very good woman, devoted to her duties, affectionate and just to those about her, truly religious, and charitable from her nature; but I doubt whether the thorough worldliness of the archdeacon's appeal struck her as it will strike the reader. People are so much more worldly in practice than they are in theory, so much keener after their own gratification in detail than they are in the abstract, that the

narrative of many an adventure would shock us, though the same adventure would not shock us in the action. One girl tells another how she has changed her mind in love; and the friend sympathises with the friend, and perhaps applauds. Had the story been told in print, the friend who had listened with equanimity would have read of such vacillation with indignation. She who vacillated herself would have hated her own performance when brought before her judgment as a matter in which she had no personal interest. Very fine things are written every day about honesty and truth, and men read them with a sort of external conviction that a man, if he be anything of a man at all, is of course honest and true. But when the internal convictions are brought out between two or three who are personally interested together,—between two or three who feel that their little gathering is, so to say, "tiled,"—those internal convictions differ very much from the external convictions. This man, in his confidences, asserts broadly that he does not mean to be thrown over, and that man has a project for throwing over somebody else; and the intention of each is that scruples are not to stand in the way of his success. The "Ruat cœlum, fiat justitia," was said, no doubt, from an outside balcony to a crowd, and the speaker knew that he was talking buncombe. The "Rem, si possis recte, si non, quocunque modo," was whispered into the ear in a club smoking-room, and the whisperer intended that his words should prevail.

Lady Lufton had often heard her friend the archdeacon preach, and she knew well the high tone which he could take as to the necessity of trusting to our hopes for the future for all our true happiness; and

yet she sympathised with him when he told her that he was broken-hearted because his son would take a step which might possibly interfere with his worldly prosperity. Had the archdeacon been preaching about matrimony, he would have recommended young men, in taking wives to themselves, especially to look for young women who feared the Lord. But in talking about his own son's wife, no word as to her eligibility or non-eligibility in this respect escaped his lips. Had he talked on the subject till nightfall no such word would have been spoken. Had any friend of his own, man or woman, in discussing such a matter with him and asking his advice upon it, alluded to the fear of the Lord, the allusion would have been distasteful to him, and would have smacked to his palate of hypocrisy. Lady Lufton, who understood as well as any woman what it was to be "tiled" with a friend, took all this in good part. The archdeacon had spoken out of his heart what was in his heart. One of his children had married a marquis. Another might probably become a bishop,—perhaps an archbishop. The third might be a county squire,—high among county squires. But he could only so become by walking warily;—and now he was bent on marrying the penniless daughter of an impoverished half-mad country curate, who was about to be tried for stealing twenty pounds! Lady Lufton, in spite of all her arguments, could not refuse her sympathy to her old friend.

"After all, from what you say, I suppose they are not engaged?"

"I do not know," said the archdeacon. "I cannot tell!"

"And what do you wish me to do?"

"Oh,—nothing. I came over, as I said before, because I thought he was here. I think it right, before he has absolutely committed himself, to take every means in my power to make him understand that I shall withdraw from him all pecuniary assistance,—now and for the future."

"My friend, that threat seems to me to be so terrible."

"It is the only power I have left to me."

"But you, who are so affectionate by nature, would never adhere to it."

"I will try. I will do my best to be firm. I will at once put everything beyond his control after my death." The archdeacon, as he uttered these terrible words,—words which were awful to Lady Lufton's ears,—resolved that he would endeavour to nurse his own wrath; but, at the same time, almost hated himself for his own pusillanimity, because he feared that his wrath would die away before he should have availed himself of its heat.

"I would do nothing rash of that kind," said Lady Lufton. "Your object is to prevent the marriage,—not to punish him for it when once he has made it."

"He is not to have his own way in everything, Lady Lufton."

"But you should first try to prevent it."

"What can I do to prevent it?"

Lady Lufton paused for a couple of minutes before she replied. She had a scheme in her head, but it seemed to her to savour of cruelty. And yet at present it was her chief duty to assist her old friend, if any assistance could be given. There could hardly be a doubt that such a marriage as this, of which they were

speaking, was in itself an evil. In her case, the case of her son, there had been no question of a trial, of money stolen, of aught that was in truth disgraceful. "I think, if I were you, Dr. Grantly," she said, "that I would see the young lady while I was here."

"See her myself?" said the archdeacon. The idea of seeing Grace Crawley himself had, up to this moment, never entered his head.

"I think I would do so."

"I think I will," said the archdeacon, after a pause. Then he got up from his chair. "If I am to do it, I had better do it at once."

"Be gentle with her, my friend." The archdeacon paused again. He certainly had entertained the idea of encountering Miss Crawley with severity rather than gentleness. Lady Lufton rose from her seat, and coming up to him, took one of his hands between her own two. "Be gentle to her," she said. "You have owned that she has done nothing wrong." The archdeacon bowed his head in token of assent and left the room.

Poor Grace Crawley!

CHAPTER II.

A DOUBLE PLEDGE.

THE archdeacon, as he walked across from the Court to the parsonage, was very thoughtful and his steps were very slow. This idea of seeing Miss Crawley herself had been suggested to him suddenly, and he had to determine how he would bear himself towards her, and what he would say to her. Lady Lufton had beseeched him to be gentle with her. Was the mission one in which gentleness would be possible? Must it not be his object to make this young lady understand that she could not be right in desiring to come into his family and share in all his good things when she had got no good things of her own,—nothing but evil things to bring with her? And how could this be properly explained to the young lady in gentle terms? Must he not be round with her, and give her to understand in plain words,—the plainest which he could use,—that she would not get his good things, though she would most certainly impose the burden of all her evil things on the man whom she was proposing to herself as a husband. He remembered very well as he went that he had been told that Miss Crawley had herself refused the offer, feeling herself to be unfit for the honour tendered to her; but he suspected the sincerity of such a refusal. Calculating in his own mind

the unreasonably great advantages which would be conferred on such a young lady as Miss Crawley by a marriage with his son, he declared to himself that any girl must be very wicked indeed who should expect, or even accept, so much more than was her due;—but nevertheless he could not bring himself to believe that any girl, when so tempted, would, in sincerity, decline to commit this great wickedness. If he was to do any good by seeing Miss Crawley, must it not consist in a proper explanation to her of the selfishness, abomination, and altogether damnable blackness of such wickedness as this on the part of a young woman in her circumstances? "Heaven and earth!" he must say, "here are you, without a penny in your pocket, with hardly decent raiment on your back, with a thief for your father, and you think that you are to come and share in all the wealth that the Grantlys have amassed, that you are to have a husband with broad acres, a big house, and game preserves, and become one of a family whose name has never been touched by a single accusation,—no, not by a suspicion? No;—injustice such as that shall never be done betwixt you and me. You may wring my heart, and ruin my son; but the broad acres, and the big house, and the game preserves, and the rest of it, shall never be your reward for doing so." How was all that to be told effectively to a young woman in gentle words? And then how was a man in the archdeacon's position to be desirous of gentle words,—gentle words which would not be efficient,—when he knew well in his heart of hearts that he had nothing but his threats on which to depend. He had no more power of disinheriting his own son for such an offence as that contemplated than he had

of blowing out his own brains, and he knew that it was so. He was a man incapable of such persistency of wrath against one whom he loved. He was neither cruel enough nor strong enough to do such a thing. He could only threaten to do it, and make what best use he might of threats, whilst threats might be of avail. In spite of all that he had said to his wife, to Lady Lufton, and to himself, he knew very well that if his son did sin in this way he, the father, would forgive the sin of the son.

In going across from the front gate of the Court to the parsonage there was a place where three roads met, and on this spot there stood a finger-post. Round this finger-post there was now pasted a placard, which at once arrested the archdeacon's eye:—"Cosby Lodge;—Sale of furniture;—Growing crops to be sold on the grounds. Three hunters. A brown gelding warranted for saddle or harness!"—The archdeacon himself had given the brown gelding to his son, as a great treasure.—"Three Alderney cows, two cow-calves, a low phaeton, a gig, two ricks of hay." In this fashion were proclaimed in odious details all those comfortable additions to a gentleman's house in the country, with which the archdeacon was so well acquainted. Only last November he had recommended his son to buy a certain new-invented clod-crusher, and the clod-crusher had of course been bought. The bright blue paint upon it had not as yet given way to the stains of the ordinary farm-yard muck and mire;—and here was the clod-crusher advertised for sale! The archdeacon did not want his son to leave Cosby Lodge. He knew well enough that his son need not leave Cosby Lodge. Why had the foolish fellow been

in such a hurry with his hideous ill-conditioned advertisements? Gentle! How was he in such circumstances to be gentle? He raised his umbrella and poked angrily at the disgusting notice. The iron ferule caught the paper at a chink in the post, and tore it from the top to the bottom. But what was the use? A horrid ugly bill lying torn in such a spot would attract only more attention than one fixed to a post. He could not condescend, however, to give to it further attention, but passed on up to the parsonage. Gentle, indeed!

Nevertheless Archdeacon Grantly was a gentleman, and never yet had dealt more harshly with any woman than we have sometimes seen him do with his wife,—when he would say to her an angry word or two with a good deal of marital authority. His wife, who knew well what his angry words were worth, never even suggested to herself that she had cause for complaint on that head. Had she known that the archdeacon was about to undertake such a mission as this which he had now in hand, she would not have warned him to be gentle. She, indeed, would have strongly advised him not to undertake the mission, cautioning him that the young lady would probably get the better of him.

"Grace, my dear," said Mrs. Robarts, coming up into the nursery in which Miss Crawley was sitting with the children, "come out here a moment, will you?" Then Grace left the children and went out into the passage. "My dear, there is a gentleman in the drawing-room who asks to see you."

"A gentleman, Mrs. Robarts! What gentleman?" But Grace, though she asked the question, conceived that the gentleman must be Henry Grantly. Her mind

did not suggest to her the possibility of any other gentleman coming to see her.

"You must not be surprised or allow yourself to be frightened."

"Oh, Mrs. Robarts, who is it?"

"It is Major Grantly's father."

"The archdeacon?"

"Yes, dear; Archdeacon Grantly. He is in the drawing-room."

"Must I see him, Mrs. Robarts?"

"Well, Grace,—I think you must. I hardly know how you can refuse. He is an intimate friend of everybody here at Framley."

"What will he say to me?"

"Nay; that I cannot tell. I suppose you know——"

"He has come, no doubt, to bid me have nothing to say to his son. He need not have troubled himself. But he may say what he likes. I am not a coward, and I will go to him."

"Stop a moment, Grace. Come into my room for an instant. The children have pulled your hair about." But Grace, though she followed Mrs. Robarts into the bedroom, would have nothing done to her hair. She was too proud for that,—and we may say, also, too little confident in any good which such resources might effect on her behalf. "Never mind about that," she said. "What am I to say to him?" Mrs. Robarts paused before she replied, feeling that the matter was one which required some deliberation. "Tell me what I must say to him," said Grace, repeating the question.

"I hardly know what your own feelings are, my dear."

"Yes, you do. You do know. If I had all the world to give, I would give it all to Major Grantly."

"Tell him that, then."

"No, I will not tell him that. Never mind about my frock, Mrs. Robarts. I do not care for that. I will tell him that I love his son and his granddaughter too well to injure them. I will tell him nothing else. I might as well go now." Mrs. Robarts, as she looked at Grace, was astonished at the serenity of her face. And yet when her hand was on the drawing-room door Grace hesitated, looked back, and trembled. Mrs. Robarts blew a kiss to her from the stairs; and then the door was opened, and the girl found herself in the presence of the archdeacon. He was standing on the rug, with his back to the fire, and his heavy ecclesiastical hat was placed on the middle of the round table. The hat caught Grace's eye at the moment of her entrance, and she felt that all the thunders of the church were contained within it. And then the archdeacon himself was so big, and so clerical, and so imposing! Her father's aspect was severe, but the severity of her father's face was essentially different from that expressed by the archdeacon. Whatever impression came from her father came from the man himself. There was no outward adornment there; there was, so to say, no wig about Mr. Crawley. Now the archdeacon was not exactly adorned; but he was so thoroughly imbued with high clerical belongings and sacerdotal fitnesses as to appear always as a walking, sitting, or standing impersonation of parsondom. To poor Grace, as she entered the room, he appeared to be an impersonation of parsondom in its severest aspect.

"Miss Crawley, I believe?" said he.

"Yes, sir," said she, curtseying ever so slightly, as she stood before him at some considerable distance.

His first idea was that his son must be indeed a fool if he was going to give up Cosby Lodge and all Barsetshire, and retire to Pau, for so slight and unattractive a creature as he now saw before him. But this idea stayed with him only for a moment. As he continued to gaze at her during the interview he came to perceive that there was very much more than he had perceived at the first glance, and that his son, after all, had had eyes to see, though perhaps not a heart to understand.

"Will you not take a chair?" he said. Then Grace sat down, still at a distance from the archdeacon, and he kept his place upon the rug. He felt that there would be a difficulty in making her feel the full force of his eloquence all across the room; and yet he did not know how to bring himelf nearer to her. She became suddenly very important in his eyes, and he was to some extent afraid of her. She was so slight, so meek, so young; and yet there was about her something so beautifully feminine,—and, withal, so like a lady,—that he felt instinctively that he could not attack her with harsh words. Had her lips been full, and her colour high, and had her eyes rolled; had she put forth against him any of that ordinary artillery with which youthful feminine batteries are charged, he would have been ready to rush to the combat. But this girl, about whom his son had gone mad, sat there as passively as though she were conscious of the possession of no artillery. There was not a single gun fired from beneath her eyelids. He knew not why, but he respected his son now more than he had respected him for the last two months;—more, perhaps, than he had ever respected him before. He was as eager as ever against

the marriage;—but in thinking of his son in what he said and did after these first few moments of the interview, he ceased to think of him with contempt. The creature before him was a woman who grew in his opinion till he began to feel that she was in truth fit to be the wife of his son,—if only she were not a pauper, and the daughter of a mad curate, and, alas! too probably of a thief. Though his feeling towards the girl was changed, his duty to himself, his family, and his son was the same as ever, and therefore he began his task.

"Perhaps you had not expected to see me?" he said.

"No, indeed, sir."

"Nor had I intended when I came over here to call on my old friend, Lady Lufton, to come up to this house. But as I knew that you were here, Miss Crawley, I thought that upon the whole it would be better that I should see you." Then he paused as though he expected that Grace would say something; but Grace had nothing to say. "Of course you must understand, Miss Crawley, that I should not venture to speak to you on this subject unless I myself were very closely interested in it." He had not yet said what was the subject, and it was not probable that Grace should give him any assistance by affecting to understand this without direct explanation from him. She sat quite motionless, and did not even aid him by showing by her altered colour that she understood his purpose. "My son has told me," said he, "that he has professed an attachment for you, Miss Crawley."

Then there was another pause, and Grace felt that she was compelled to say something. "Major Grantly

has been very good to me," she said, and then she hated herself for having uttered words which were so tame and unwomanly in their spirit. Of course her lover's father would despise her for having so spoken. After all it did not much signify. If he would only despise her and go away, it would perhaps be for the best.

"I do not know about being good," said the archdeacon. "I think he is good. I think he means to be good."

"I am sure he is good," said Grace, warmly.

"You know he has a daughter, Miss Crawley?"

"Oh, yes; I know Edith well."

"Of course his first duty is to her. Is it not? And he owes much to his family. Do you not feel that?"

"Of course I feel it, sir." The poor girl had always heard Dr. Grantly spoken of as the archdeacon, but she did not in the least know what she ought to call him.

"Now, Miss Crawley, pray listen to me. I will speak to you very openly. I must speak to you openly, because it is my duty on my son's behalf;—but I will endeavour to speak to you kindly also. Of yourself I have heard nothing but what is favourable, and there is no reason as yet why I should not respect and esteem you." Grace told herself that she would do nothing which ought to forfeit his respect and esteem, but that she did not care two straws whether his respect and esteem were bestowed on her or not. She was striving after something very different from that. "If my son were to marry you, he would greatly injure himself, and would very greatly injure his child." Again he paused. He had told her to listen, and she was resolved that she would listen,—unless he should

say something which might make a word from her necessary at the moment. "I do not know whether there does at present exist any engagement between you?"

"There is no engagement, sir."

"I am glad of that,—very glad of it. I do not know whether you are aware that my son is dependent upon me for the greater part of his income. It is so, and as I am so circumstanced with my son, of course I feel the closest possible concern in his future prospects." The archdeacon did not know how to explain clearly why the fact of his making his son an annual allowance should give him a warmer interest in his son's affairs than he might have had had the major been altogether independent of him; but he trusted that Grace would understand this by her own natural lights. "Now, Miss Crawley, of course I cannot wish to say a word that shall hurt your feelings. But there are reasons——"

"I know," said she, interrupting him. "Papa is accused of stealing money. He did not steal it, but people think he did. And then we are so very poor."

"You do understand me, then,—and I feel grateful; I do indeed."

"I don't think our being poor ought to signify a bit," said Grace. "Papa is a gentleman and a clergyman, and mamma is a lady."

"But, my dear——"

"I know I ought not to be your son's wife as long as people think that papa stole the money. If he had stolen it, I ought never to be Major Grantly's wife,—or anybody's wife. I know that very well. And as for Edith,—I would sooner die than do anything that would be bad to her."

The archdeacon had now left the rug, and advanced till he was almost close to the chair on which Grace was sitting. "My dear," he said, "what you say does you very much honour,—very much honour indeed." Now that he was close to her, he could look into her eyes, and he could see the exact form of her features, and could understand,—could not help understanding, —the character of her countenance. It was a noble face, having in it nothing that was poor, nothing that was mean, nothing that was shapeless. It was a face that promised infinite beauty, with a promise that was on the very verge of fulfilment. There was a play about her mouth as she spoke, and a curl in her nostril as the eager words came from her, which almost made the selfish father give way. Why had they not told him that she was such a one as this? Why had not Henry himself spoken of the specialty of her beauty? No man in England knew better than the archdeacon the difference between beauty of one kind and beauty of another kind in a woman's face,—the one beauty which comes from health and youth and animal spirits, and which belongs to the miller's daughter, and the other beauty, which shows itself in fine lines and a noble spirit,—the beauty which comes from breeding. "What you say does you very much honour indeed," said the archdeacon.

"I should not mind at all about being poor," said Grace.

"No; no; no," said the archdeacon.

"Poor as we are,—and no clergyman, I think, ever was so poor,—I should have done as your son asked me at once, if it had been only that,—because I love him."

"If you love him you will not wish to injure him."

"I will not injure him. Sir, there is my promise." And now as she spoke she rose from her chair, and standing close to the archdeacon, laid her hand very lightly on the sleeve of his coat. "There is my promise. As long as people say that papa stole the money, I will never marry your son. There."

The archdeacon was still looking down at her, and feeling the slight touch of her fingers, raised his arm a little as though to welcome the pressure. He looked into her eyes, which were turned eagerly towards his, and when doing so was quite sure that the promise would be kept. It would have been sacrilege,—he felt that it would have been sacrilege,—to doubt such a promise. He almost relented. His soft heart, which was never very well under his own control, gave way so far that he was nearly moved to tell her that, on his son's behalf, he acquitted her of the promise. What could any man's son do better than have such a woman for his wife? It would have been of no avail had he made her such offer. The pledge she had given had not been wrung from her by his influence, nor could his influence have availed aught with her towards the alteration of her purpose. It was not the archdeacon who had taught her that it would not be her duty to take disgrace into the house of the man she loved. As he looked down upon her face two tears formed themselves in his eyes, and gradually trickled down his old nose. "My dear," he said, "if this cloud passes away from you, you shall come to us and be my daughter." And thus he also pledged himself. There was a dash of generosity about the man, in spite of his selfishness, which always made him desirous of giving largely to those who gave largely to him. He would fain that

his gifts should be the bigger, if it were possible. He longed at this moment to tell her that the dirty cheque should go for nothing. He would have done it, I think, but that it was impossible for him so to speak in her presence of that which moved her so greatly.

He had contrived that her hand should fall from his arm into his grasp, and now for a moment he held it. "You are a good girl," he said—"a dear, dear, good girl. When this cloud has passed away, you shall come to us and be our daughter."

"But it will never pass away," said Grace.

"Let us hope that it may. Let us hope that it may." Then he stooped over her and kissed her, and leaving the room, got out into the hall and thence into the garden, and so away, without saying a word of adieu to Mrs. Robarts.

As he walked across to the Court, whither he was obliged to go, because of his chaise, he was lost in surprise at what had occurred. He had gone to the parsonage, hating the girl, and despising his son. Now, as he retraced his steps, his feelings were altogether changed. He admired the girl,—and as for his son, even his anger was for the moment altogether gone. He would write to his son at once and implore him to stop the sale. He would tell his son all that had occurred, or rather would make Mrs. Grantly do so. In respect to his son he was quite safe. He thought at that moment that he was safe. There would be no use in hurling further threats at him. If Crawley were found guilty of stealing the money, there was the girl's promise. If he were acquitted, there was his own pledge. He remembered perfectly well that the girl had said more than this,—that she had not confined

her assurance to the verdict of a jury,—that she had protested that she would not accept Major Grantly's hand as long as people thought that her father had stolen the cheque; but the archdeacon felt that it would be ignoble to hold her closely to her words. The event, according to his ideas of the compact, was to depend upon the verdict of the jury. If the jury were to find Mr. Crawley not guilty, all objection on his part to the marriage was to be withdrawn. And he would keep his word! In such case it should be withdrawn.

When he came to the rags of the auctioneer's bill, which he had before torn down with his umbrella, he stopped a moment to consider how he would act at once. In the first place he would tell his son that his threats were withdrawn, and would ask him to remain at Cosby Lodge. He would write the letter as he passed through Barchester, on his way home, so that his son might receive it on the following morning; and he would refer the major to his mother for a full explanation of the circumstances. Those odious bills must be removed from every barn-door and wall in the county. At the present moment his anger against his son was chiefly directed against his ill-judged haste in having put up those ill-omened posters. Then he paused to consider what must be his wish as to the verdict of the jury. He had pledged himself to abide by the verdict, and he could not but have a wish on the subject. Could he desire in his heart that Mr. Crawley should be found guilty? He stood still for a moment thinking of this, and then he walked on, shaking his head. If it might be possible he would have no wish on the subject whatsoever.

"Well!" said Lady Lufton, stopping him in the passage,—"have you seen her?"

"Yes; I have seen her."

"Well?"

"She is a good girl,—a very good girl. I am in a great hurry, and hardly know how to tell you more now."

"You say that she is a good girl?"

"I say that she is a very good girl. An angel could not have behaved better. I will tell you all some day, Lady Lufton, but I can hardly tell you now."

When the archdeacon was gone, old Lady Lufton confided to young Lady Lufton her very strong opinion that many months would not be gone by before Grace Crawley would be the mistress of Cosby Lodge. "It will be great promotion," said the old lady, with a little toss of her head.

When Grace was interrogated afterwards by Mrs. Robarts as to what had passed between her and the archdeacon, she had very little to say as to the interview. "No, he did not scold me," she replied to an inquiry from her friend. "But he spoke about your engagement?" said Mrs. Robarts. "There is no engagement," said Grace. "But I suppose you acknowledged, my dear, that a future engagement is quite possible?" "I told him, Mrs. Robarts," Grace answered, after hesitating for a moment, "that I would never marry his son as long as papa was suspected by any one in the world of being a thief. And I will keep my word." But she said nothing to Mrs. Robarts of the pledge which the archdeacon had made to her.

CHAPTER III.

THE CROSS-GRAINEDNESS OF MEN.

By the time that the archdeacon reached Plumstead his enthusiasm in favour of Grace Crawley had somewhat cooled itself; and the language which from time to time he prepared for conveying his impressions to his wife became less fervid as he approached his home. There was his pledge, and by that he would abide;—and so much he would make both his wife and his son understand. But any idea which he might have entertained for a moment of extending the promise he had given and relaxing that given to him was gone before he saw his own chimneys. Indeed, I fear he had by that time begun to feel that the only salvation now open to him must come from the jury's verdict. If the jury should declare Mr. Crawley to be guilty, then——; he would not say even to himself that in such case all would be right, but he did feel that, much as he might regret the fate of the poor Crawleys, and of the girl whom in his warmth he had declared to be almost an angel, nevertheless to him personally such a verdict would bring consolatory comfort.

"I have seen Miss Crawley," he said to his wife, as soon as he had closed the door of his study, before he had been two minutes out of the chaise. He had de-

termined that he would dash at the subject at once, and he thus carried his resolution into effect.

"You have seen Grace Crawley?"

"Yes; I went up to the parsonage and called upon her. Lady Lufton advised me to do so."

"And Henry?"

"Oh, Henry has gone. He was only there one night. I suppose he saw her, but I am not sure."

"Would not Miss Crawley tell you?"

"I forgot to ask her." Mrs. Grantly, at hearing this, expressed her surprise by opening wide her eyes. He had gone all the way over to Framley on purpose to look after his son and learn what were his doings, and when there he had forgotten to ask the person who could have given him better information than any one else! "But it does not signify," continued the archdeacon; "she said enough to me to make that of no importance."

"And what did she say?"

"She said that she would never consent to marry Henry as long as there was any suspicion abroad as to her father's guilt."

"And you believe her promise?"

"Certainly I do; I do not doubt it in the least. I put implicit confidence in her. And I have promised her that if her father is acquitted,—I will withdraw my opposition."

"No!"

"But I have. And you would have done the same had you been there."

"I doubt that, my dear. I am not so impulsive as you are."

"You could not have helped yourself. You would

have felt yourself obliged to be equally generous with her. She came up to me and she put her hand upon me——"

"Psha!" said Mrs. Grantly.

"But she did, my dear; and then she said, 'I promise you that I will not become your son's wife while people think that papa stole this money.' What else could I do?"

"And is she pretty?"

"Very pretty; very beautiful."

"And like a lady?"

"Quite like a lady. There is no mistake about that."

"And she behaved well?"

"Admirably," said the archdeacon, who was in a measure compelled to justify the generosity into which he had been betrayed by his feelings.

"Then she is a paragon," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I don't know what you may call a paragon, my dear. I say that she is a lady, and that she is extremely good-looking, and that she behaved very well. I cannot say less in her favour. I am sure you would not say less yourself if you had been present."

"She must be a wonderful young woman."

"I don't know anything about her being wonderful."

"She must be wonderful when she has succeeded both with the son and with the father."

"I wish you had been there instead of me," said the archdeacon, angrily. Mrs. Grantly very probably wished so also, feeling that in that case a more serene mode of business would have been adopted. How keenly susceptible the archdeacon still was to the influences of feminine charms, no one knew better than

Mrs. Grantly, and whenever she became aware that he had been in this way seduced from the wisdom of his cooler judgment she always felt something akin to indignation against the seducer. As for her husband, she probably told herself at such moments that he was an old goose. "If you had been there, and Henry with you, you would have made a great deal worse job of it than I have done," said the archdeacon.

"I don't say you have made a bad job of it, my dear," said Mrs. Grantly. "But it 's past eight, and you must be terribly in want of your dinner. Had you not better go up and dress?"

In the evening the plan of the future campaign was arranged between them. The archdeacon would not write to his son at all. In passing through Barchester he had abandoned his idea of despatching a note from the hotel, feeling that such a note as would be required was not easily written in a hurry. Mrs. Grantly would now write to her son, telling him that circumstances had changed, that it would be altogether unnecessary for him to sell his furniture, and begging him to come over and see his father without a day's delay. She wrote her letter that night, and read to the archdeacon all that she had written,—with the exception of the postscript:—"You may be quite sure that there will be no unpleasantness with your father." That was the postscript which was not communicated to the archdeacon.

On the third day after that Henry Grantly did come over to Plumstead. His mother in her letter to him had not explained how it had come to pass that the sale of his furniture would be unnecessary. His father had given him to understand distinctly that his income

would be withdrawn from him unless he would express his intention of giving up Miss Crawley; and it had been admitted among them all that Cosby Lodge must be abandoned if this were done. He certainly would not give up Grace Crawley. Sooner than that, he would give up every stick in his possession, and go and live in New Zealand if it were necessary. Not only had Grace's conduct to him made him thus firm, but the natural bent of his own disposition had tended that way also. His father had attempted to dictate to him, and sooner than submit to that he would sell the coat off his back. Had his father confined his opposition to advice, and had Miss Crawley been less firm in her view of her duty, the major might have been less firm also. But things had so gone that he was determined to be fixed as granite. If others would not be moved from their resolves, neither would he. Such being the state of his mind, he could not understand why he was thus summoned to Plumstead. He had already written over to Pau about his house, and it was well that he should, at any rate, see his mother before he started. He was willing, therefore, to go to Plumstead, but he took no steps as to the withdrawal of those auctioneer's bills to which the archdeacon so strongly objected. When he drove into the rectory yard, his father was standing there before him. "Henry," he said, "I am very glad to see you. I am very much obliged to you for coming." Then Henry got out of his cart and shook hands with his father, and the archdeacon began to talk about the weather. "Your mother has gone into Barchester to see your grandfather," said the archdeacon. "If you are not tired, we might as well take a walk. I want to go up as far as Flurry's cottage."

The major of course declared that he was not at all tired, and that he should be delighted of all things to go up and see old Flurry, and thus they started. Young Grantly had not even been into the house before he left the yard with his father. Of course he was thinking of the coming sale at Cosby Lodge, and of his future life at Pau, and of his injured position in the world. There would be no longer any occasion for him to be solicitous as to the Plumstead foxes. Of course these things were in his mind; but he could not begin to speak of them till his father did so. "I 'm afraid your grandfather is not very strong," said the archdeacon, shaking his head. "I fear he won't be with us very long."

"Is it so bad as that, sir?"

"Well, you know, he is an old man, Henry; and he was always somewhat old for his age. He will be eighty, if he lives two years longer, I think. But he 'll never reach eighty;—never. You must go and see him before you go back home; you must indeed." The major, of course, promised that he would see his grandfather, and the archdeacon told his son how nearly the old man had fallen in the passage between the cathedral and the deanery. In this way they had nearly made their way up to the gamekeeper's cottage without a word of reference to any subject that touched upon the matter of which each of them was of course thinking. Whether the major intended to remain at home or to live at Pau, the subject of Mr. Harding's health was a natural topic for conversation between him and his father; but when his father stopped suddenly, and began to tell him how a fox had been trapped on Darvell's farm,—"and of course it was a

Plumstead fox,—there can be no doubt that Flurry is right about that;"—when the archdeacon spoke of this iniquity with much warmth, and told his son how he had at once written off to Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, and how Mr. Thorne had declared that he did n't believe a word of it, and how Flurry had produced the pad of the fox, with the marks of the trap on the skin, —then the son began to feel that the ground was becoming very warm, and that he could not go on much longer without rushing into details about Grace Crawley. "I 've no more doubt that it was one of our foxes than that I stand here," said the archdeacon.

"It does n't matter where the fox was bred. It should n't have been trapped," said the major.

"Of course not," said the archdeacon, indignantly. I wonder whether he would have been so keen had a Romanist priest come into his parish, and turned one of his Protestants into a Papist?

Then Flurry came up, and produced the identical pad out of his pocket. "I don't suppose it was intended," said the major, looking at the interesting relic with scrutinising eyes. "I suppose it was caught in a rabbit-trap,—eh, Flurry?"

"I don't see what right a man has with traps at all, when gentlemen is particular about their foxes," said Flurry. "Of course they 'd call it rabbits."

"I never liked that man on Darvell's farm," said the archdeacon.

"Nor I either," said Flurry. "No farmer ought to be on that land who don't have a horse of his own. And if I war Squire Thorne, I would n't have no farmer there who did n't keep no horse. When a farmer has a horse of his own, and follies the hounds,

there ain't no rabbit-traps;—never. How does that come about, Mr. Henry? Rabbits! I know very well what rabbits is!"

Mr. Henry shook his head, and turned away, and the archdeacon followed him. There was an hypocrisy about this pretended care for the foxes which displeased the major. He could not, of course, tell his father that the foxes were no longer anything to him; but yet he must make it understood that such was his conviction. His mother had written to him, saying that the sale of furniture need not take place. It might be all very well for his mother to say that, or for his father; but, after what had taken place, he could consent to remain in England on no other understanding than that his income should be made permanent to him. Such permanence must not be any longer dependent on his father's caprice. In these days he had come to be somewhat in love with poverty and Pau, and had been feeding on the luxury of his grievance. There is, perhaps, nothing so pleasant as the preparation for self-sacrifice. To give up Cosby Lodge and the foxes, to marry a penniless wife, and go and live at Pau on six or seven hundred a year, seemed just now to Major Grantly to be a fine thing, and he did not intend to abandon this fine thing without receiving a very clear reason for doing so. "I can't quite understand Thorne," said the archdeacon. "He used to be so particular about the foxes, and I don't suppose that a country gentleman will change his ideas because he has given up hunting himself."

"Mr. Thorne never thought much of Flurry," said Henry Grantly, with his mind intent upon Pau and his grievance.

"He might take my word, at any rate," said the archdeacon.

It was a known fact that the archdeacon's solicitude about the Plumstead coverts was wholly on behalf of his son the major. The major himself knew this thoroughly, and felt that his father's present special anxiety was intended as a corroboration of the tidings conveyed in his mother's letter. Every word so uttered was meant to have reference to his son's future residence in the country. "Father," he said, turning round shortly, and standing before the archdeacon in the pathway, "I think you are quite right about the coverts. I feel sure that every gentleman who preserves a fox does good to the country. I am sorry that I shall not have a closer interest in the matter myself."

"Why should n't you have a closer interest in it?" said the archdeacon.

"Because I shall be living abroad."

"You got your mother's letter?"

"Yes; I got my mother's letter."

"Did she not tell you that you can stay where you are?"

"Yes, she said so. But, to tell you the truth, sir, I do not like the risk of living beyond my assured income."

"But if I justify it?"

"I do not wish to complain, sir, but you have made me understand that you can, and that in certain circumstances you will, at a moment withdraw what you give me. Since this was said to me, I have felt myself to be unsafe in such a house as Cosby Lodge."

The archdeacon did not know how to explain. He had intended that the real explanation should be given

by Mrs. Grantly, and had been anxious to return to his old relations with his son without any exact terms on his own part. But his son was, as he thought, awkward, and would drive him to some speech that was unnecessary. "You need not be unsafe there at all," he said, half angrily.

"I must be unsafe if I am not sure of my income."

"Your income is not in any danger. But you had better speak to your mother about it. For myself, I think I may say that I have never yet behaved to any of you with harshness. A son should, at any rate, not be offended because a father thinks that he is entitled to some consideration for what he does."

"There are some points on which a son cannot give way even to his father, sir."

"You had better speak to your mother, Henry. She will explain to you what has taken place. Look at that plantation. You don't remember it, but every tree there was planted since you were born. I bought that farm from old Mr. Thorne, when he was purchasing St. Ewold's Downs, and it was the first bit of land I ever had of my own."

"That is not in Plumstead, I think?"

"No; this is Plumstead, where we stand, but that 's in Eiderdown. The parishes run in and out here. I never bought any other land as cheap as I bought that."

"And did old Thorne make a good purchase at St. Ewold's?"

"Yes, I fancy he did. It gave him the whole of the parish, which was a great thing. It is astonishing how land has risen in value since that, and yet rents are not so very much higher. They who buy

land now can't have above two-and-a-half for their money."

"I wonder people are so fond of land," said the major.

"It is a comfortable feeling to know that you stand on your own ground. Land is about the only thing that can't fly away. And then, you see, land gives so much more than the rent. It gives position and influence and political power, to say nothing about the game. We 'll go back now. I dare say your mother will be at home by this time."

The archdeacon was striving to teach a great lesson to his son when he thus spoke of the pleasure which a man feels when he stands upon his own ground. He was bidding his son to understand how great was the position of an heir to a landed property, and how small the position of a man depending on what Dr. Grantly himself would have called a scratch income—an income made up of a few odds and ends, a share or two in this company and a share or two in that, a slight venture in foreign stocks, a small mortgage, and such-like convenient but uninfluential driblets. A man, no doubt, may live at Pau on driblets; may pay his way and drink his bottle of cheap wine, and enjoy life after a fashion while reading Galignani and looking at the mountains. But,—as it seemed to the archdeacon,—when there was a choice between this kind of thing, and fox-coverts at Plumstead, and a seat among the magistrates of Barsetshire, and an establishment full of horses, beeves, swine, carriages, and hayricks, a man brought up as his son had been brought up ought not to be very long in choosing. It never entered into the archdeacon's mind that he was tempting his son; but

Henry Grantly felt that he was having the good things of the world shown to him, and that he was being told that they should be his—for a consideration.

The major, in his present mood, looked at the matter from his own point of view, and determined that the consideration was too high. He was pledged not to give up Grace Crawley, and he would not yield on that point, though he might be tempted by all the fox-coverts in Barsetshire. At this moment, he did not know how far his father was prepared to yield, or how far it was expected that he should yield himself. He was told that he had to speak to his mother. He would speak to his mother, but, in the mean time, he could not bring himself to make a comfortable answer to his father's eloquent praise of landed property. He could not allow himself to be enthusiastic on the matter till he knew what was expected of him if he chose to submit to be made a British squire. At present Galignani and the mountains had their charms for him. There was, therefore, but little conversation between the father and the son as they walked back to the rectory.

Late that night the major heard the whole story from his mother. Gradually, and as though unintentionally, Mrs. Grantly told him all she knew of the archdeacon's visit to Framley. Mrs. Grantly was quite as anxious as was her husband to keep her son at home, and therefore she omitted in her story those little sneers against Grace which she herself had been tempted to make by the archdeacon's fervour in the girl's favour. The major said as little as was possible while he was being told of his father's adventure, and expressed neither anger nor satisfaction till he had

been made thoroughly to understand that Grace had pledged herself not to marry him as long as any suspicion should rest upon her father's name.

"Your father is quite satisfied with her," said Mrs. Grantly. "He thinks that she is behaving very well."

"My father had no right to exact such a pledge."

"But she made it of her own accord. She was the first to speak about Mr. Crawley's supposed guilt. Your father never mentioned it."

"He must have led to it; and I think he had no right to do so. He had no right to go to her at all."

"Now don't be foolish, Henry."

"I don't see that I am foolish."

"Yes, you are. A man is foolish if he won't take what he wants without asking exactly how he is to come by it. That your father should be anxious is the most natural thing in the world. You know how high he has always held his own head, and how much he thinks about the characters and position of clergymen. It is not surprising that he should dislike the idea of such a marriage."

"Grace Crawley would disgrace no family," said the lover.

"That 's all very well for you to say, and I 'll take your word that it is so;—that is, as far as the young lady goes herself. And there 's your father almost as much in love with her as you are. I don't know what you would have."

"I would be left alone."

"But what harm has been done you? From what you yourself have told me, I know that Miss Crawley has said the same thing to you that she has said

to your father. You can't but admire her for the feeling."

"I admire her for everything."

"Very well. We don't say anything against that."

"And I don't mean to give her up."

"Very well again. Let us hope that Mr. Crawley will be acquitted, and then all will be right. Your father never goes back from his promise. He is always better than his word. You 'll find that if Mr. Crawley is acquitted, or if he escapes in any way, your father will only be happy of an excuse to make much of the young lady. You should not be hard on him, Henry. Don't you see that it is his one great desire to keep you near to him? The sight of those odious bills nearly broke his heart."

"Then why did he threaten me?"

"Henry, you are obstinate."

"I am not obstinate, mother."

"Yes, you are. You remember nothing, and you forget nothing. You expect everything to be made smooth for you, and will do nothing towards making things smooth for anybody else. You ought to promise to give up the sale. If the worst came to the worst, your father would not let you suffer in pocket for yielding to him in so much."

"If the worst comes to the worst, I wish to take nothing from my father."

"You won't put off the sale, then?"

The son paused a moment before he answered his mother, thinking over all the circumstances of his position. "I cannot do so as long as I am subject to my father's threat," he said at last. "What took place between my father and Miss Crawley can go for noth-

ing with me. He has told me that his allowance to me is to be withdrawn. Let him tell me that he has reconsidered the matter."

"But he has not withdrawn it. The last quarter was paid to your account only the other day. He does not mean to withdraw it."

"Let him tell me so; let him tell me that my power of living at Cosby Lodge does not depend on my marriage,—that my income will be continued to me whether I marry or no, and I 'll arrange matters with the auctioneer to-morrow. You can't suppose that I should prefer to live in France."

"Henry, you are too hard on your father."

"I think, mother, he has been too hard upon me."

"It is you that are to blame now. I tell you plainly that that is my opinion. If evil come of it, it will be your own fault."

"If evil come of it I must bear it."

"A son ought to give up something to his father;—especially to a father so indulgent as yours."

But it was of no use. And Mrs. Grantly when she went to her bed could only lament in her own mind over what, in discussing the matter afterwards with her sister, she called the cross-grainedness of men. "They are as like each other as two peas," she said, "and though each of them wished to be generous, neither of them would condescend to be just." Early on the following morning there was, no doubt, much said on the subject between the archdeacon and his wife before they met their son at breakfast; but neither at breakfast nor afterwards was there a word said between the father and son that had the slightest reference to the subject in dispute between them. The archdeacon

made no more speeches in favour of land, nor did he revert to the foxes. He was very civil to his son;—too civil by half, as Mrs. Grantly continued to say to herself. And then the major drove himself away in his cart, going through Barchester, so that he might see his grandfather. When he wished his father good-bye, the archdeacon shook hands with him, and said something about the chance of rain. Had he not better take the big umbrella? The major thanked him courteously, and said that he did not think it would rain. Then he was gone. "Upon his own head be it," said the archdeacon when his son's step was heard in the passage leading to the back yard. Then Mrs. Grantly got up quietly and followed her son. She found him settling himself in his dog-cart, while the servant who was to accompany him was still at the horse's head. She went up close to him, and, standing by the wheel of the gig, whispered a word or two into his ear. "If you love me, Henry, you will postpone the sale. Do it for my sake." There came across his face a look of great pain, but he answered her not a word.

The archdeacon was walking about the room striking one hand open with the other closed, clearly in a tumult of anger, when his wife returned to him. "I have done all that I can," he said,—"all that I can; more, indeed, than was becoming for me. Upon his own head be it. Upon his own head be it!"

"What is it that you fear?" she asked.

"I fear nothing. But if he chooses to sell his things at Cosby Lodge he must abide the consequences. They shall not be replaced with my money."

"What will it matter if he does sell them?"

"Matter! Do you think there is a single person in

the county who will not know that his doing so is the sign that he has quarrelled with me?"

"But he has not quarrelled with you."

"I can tell you, then, that in that case I shall have quarrelled with him! I have not been a hard father, but there are some things which a man cannot bear. Of course you will take his part."

"I am taking no part. I only want to see peace between you."

"Peace!—yes; peace indeed. I am to yield in everything. I am to be nobody. Look here;—as sure as ever an auctioneer's hammer is raised at Cosby Lodge, I will alter the settlement of the property. Every acre shall belong to Charles. There is my word for it." The poor woman had nothing more to say;—nothing more to say at that moment. She thought that at the present conjuncture her husband was less in the wrong than her son, but she could not tell him so lest she should strengthen him in his wrath.

Henry Grantly found his grandfather in bed, with Posy seated on the bed beside him. "My father told me that you were not quite well, and I thought that I would look in," said the major.

"Thank you, my dear;—it is very good of you. There is not much the matter with me, but I am not quite so strong as I was once." And the old man smiled as he held his grandson's hand.

"And how is cousin Posy?" said the major.

"Posy is quite well;—is n't she, my darling?" said the old man.

"Grandpa does n't go to the cathedral now," said Posy; "so I come in to talk to him. Don't I, grandpa?"

"And to play cat's-cradle;—only we have not had any cat's-cradle this morning,—have we, Posy?"

"Mrs. Baxter told me not to play this morning, because it 's cold for grandpa to sit up in bed," said Posy.

When the major had been there about twenty minutes he was preparing to take his leave,—but Mr. Harding, bidding Posy to go out of the room, told his grandson that he had a word to say to him. "I don't like to interfere, Henry," he said, "but I am afraid that things are not quite smooth at Plumstead."

"There is nothing wrong between me and my mother," said the major.

"God forbid that there should be; but, my dear boy, don't let there be anything wrong between you and your father. He is a good man, and the time will come when you will be proud of his memory."

"I am proud of him now."

"Then be gentle with him,—and submit yourself. I am an old man now,—very fast going away from all those I love here. But I am happy in leaving my children because they have ever been gentle to me and kind. If I am permitted to remember them whither I am going, my thoughts of them will all be pleasant. Should it not be much to them that they have made my death-bed happy?"

The major could not but tell himself that Mr. Harding had been a man easy to please, easy to satisfy, and, in that respect, very different from his father. But of course he said nothing of this. "I will do my best," he replied.

"Do, my boy. Honour thy father,—that thy days may be long in the land."

It seemed to the major as he drove away from Barchester that everybody was against him; and yet he was sure that he himself was right. He could not give up Grace Crawley; and unless he were to do so he could not live at Cosby Lodge.

CHAPTER IV.

A LADY PRESENTS HER COMPLIMENTS TO MISS L. D.

One morning, while Lily Dale was staying with Mrs. Thorne in London, there was brought up to her room, as she was dressing for dinner, a letter which the postman had just left for her. The address was written with a feminine hand, and Lily was at once aware that she did not know the writing. The angles were very acute, and the lines were very straight, and the vowels looked to be cruel and false, with their sharp points and their open eyes. Lily at once knew that it was the performance of a woman who had been taught to write at school, and not at home, and she became prejudiced against the writer before she opened the letter. When she had opened the letter and read it, her feelings towards the writer were not of a kindly nature. It was as follows:—

"A lady presents her compliments to Miss L. D., and earnestly implores Miss L. D. to give her an answer to the following question: Is Miss L. D. engaged to marry Mr. J. E.? The lady in question pledges herself not to interfere with Miss L. D. in any way should the answer be in the affirmative. The lady earnestly requests that a reply to this question may be sent to M. D., Post-office, 455 Edgeware Road. In order that

L. D. may not doubt that M. D. has an interest in J. E., M. D. encloses the last note she received from him before he started for the Continent."

Then there was a scrap, which Lily well knew to be in the handwriting of John Eames, and the scrap was as follows:—"Dearest M.—Punctually at 8.30. Ever and always your unalterable J. E."

Lily, as she read this, did not comprehend that John's note to M. D. had been in itself a joke.

Lily Dale had heard of anonymous letters before, but had never received one, or even seen one. Now that she had one in her hand, it seemed to her that there could be nothing more abominable than the writing of such a letter. She let it drop from her, as though the receiving, and opening, and reading it had been a stain to her. As it lay on the ground at her feet, she trod upon it. Of what sort could a woman be who would write such a letter as that? Answer it! Of course she would not answer it. It never occurred to her for a moment that it could become her to answer it. Had she been at home or with her mother, she would have called her mother to her, and Mrs. Dale would have taken it from the ground, and have read it, and then destroyed it. As it was, she must pick it up herself. She did so, and declared to herself that there should be an end to it. It might be right that somebody should see it, and therefore she would show it to Emily Dunstable. After that it should be destroyed.

Of course the letter could have no effect upon her. So she told herself. But it did have a very strong effect, and probably the exact effect which the writer had intended that it should have. J. E. was, of course,

John Eames. There was no doubt about that. What a fool the writer must have been to talk of L. D. in the letter, when the outside cover was plainly addressed to Miss Lilian Dale! But there are some people for whom the pretended mystery of initials has a charm, and who love the darkness of anonymous letters. As Lily thought of this, she stamped on the letter again. Who was the M. D. to whom she was required to send an answer,—with whom John Eames corresponded in the most affectionate terms? She had resolved that she would not even ask herself a question about M. D., and yet she could not divert her mind from the inquiry. It was, at any rate, a fact that there must be some woman designated by the letters,—some woman who had, at any rate, chosen to call herself M. D. And John Eames had called her M. There must, at any rate, be such a woman. This female, be she who she might, had thought it worth her while to make this inquiry about John Eames, and had manifestly learned something of Lily's own history. And the woman had pledged herself not to interfere with John Eames, if L. D. would only condescend to say that she was engaged to him! As Lily thought of the proposition, she trod upon the letter for the third time. Then she picked it up, and having no place of custody under lock and key ready to her hand, she put it in her pocket.

At night, before she went to bed, she showed the letter to Emily Dunstable. "Is it not surprising that any woman could bring herself to write such a letter?" said Lily.

But Miss Dunstable hardly saw it in the same light. "If anybody were to write me such a letter about Ber-

nard," said she, "I should show it to him as a good joke."

"That would be very different. You and Bernard, of course, understand each other."

"And so will you and Mr. Eames—some day, I hope."

"Never more than we do now, dear. The thing that annoys me is that such a woman as that should have even heard my name at all."

"As long as people have got ears and tongues, people will hear other people's names."

Lily paused a moment, and then spoke again, asking another question. "I suppose this woman does know him? She must know him, because he has written to her."

"She knows something about him, no doubt, and has some reason for wishing that you should quarrel with him. If I were you, I should take care not to gratify her. As for Mr. Eames's note, it is a joke."

"It is nothing to me," said Lily.

"I suppose," continued Emily, "that most gentlemen become acquainted with some people that they would not wish all their friends to know that they knew. They go about so much more than we do, and meet people of all sorts."

"No gentleman should become intimately acquainted with a woman who could write such a letter as that," said Lily. And, as she spoke, she remembered a certain episode in John Eames's early life, which had reached her from a source which she had not doubted, and which had given her pain and offended her. She had believed that John Eames had in that case behaved cruelly to a young woman, and had thought that her offence had come simply from that feeling. "But of

course it is nothing to me," she said. "Mr. Eames can choose his friends as he likes. I only wish that my name might not be mentioned to them."

"It is not from him that she has heard it."

"Perhaps not. As I said before, of course it does not signify; only there is something very disagreeable in the whole thing. The idea is so hateful! Of course this woman means me to understand that she considers herself to have a claim upon Mr. Eames, and that I stand in her way."

"And why should you not stand in her way?"

"I will stand in nobody's way. Mr. Eames has a right to give his hand to any one that he pleases. I, at any rate, can have no cause of offence against him. The only thing is, that I do wish that my name could be left alone." Lily, when she was in her own room again, did destroy the letter; but before she did so she read it again, and it became so indelibly impressed on her memory that she could not forget even the words of it. The lady who wrote had pledged herself under certain conditions, "not to interfere with Miss L. D." "Interfere with me!" Lily said to herself; "nobody can interfere with me; nobody has power to do so." As she turned it over in her mind, her heart became hard against John Eames. No woman would have troubled herself to write such a letter without some cause for the writing. That the writer was vulgar, false, and unfeminine, Lily thought that she could perceive from the letter itself; but no doubt the woman knew John Eames, had some interest in the question of his marriage, and was entitled to some answer to her question;—only was not entitled to such answer from Lily Dale.

For some weeks past now, up to the hour at which this anonymous letter had reached her hands, Lily's heart had been growing soft and still softer towards John Eames; and now again it had become hardened. I think that the appearance of Adolphus Crosbie in the Park, that momentary vision of the real man by which the divinity of the imaginary Apollo had been dashed to the ground, had done a service to the cause of the other; of the lover who had never been a god, but who of late years had, at any rate, grown into the full dimensions of a man. Unfortunately for the latter, he had commenced his love-making when he was but little more than a boy. Lily, as she had thought of the two together in the days of her solitude, after she had been deserted by Crosbie, had ever pictured to herself the lover whom she had preferred as having something godlike in his favour, as being far the superior in wit, in manner, in acquirement, and in personal advantage. There had been good-nature, and true hearty love on the side of the other man; but circumstances had seemed to show that his good-nature was equal to all, and that he was able to share even his hearty love among two or three. A man of such a character, known by a girl from his boyhood as John Eames had been known by Lily Dale, was likely to find more favour as a friend than as a lover. So it had been between John Eames and Lily. While the untrue memory of what Crosbie was, or ever had been, was present to her, she could hardly bring herself to accept in her mind the idea of a lover who was less noble in his manhood than the false picture which that untrue memory was ever painting for her. Then had come before her eyes the actual man; and though he had

been seen but for a moment, the false image had been broken into shivers. Lily had discovered that she had been deceived, and that her forgiveness had been asked, not by a god, but by an ordinary human being. As regarded the ungodlike man himself, this could make no difference. Having thought upon the matter deeply, she had resolved that she would not marry Mr. Crosbie, and had pledged herself to that effect to friends who never could have brought themselves to feel affection for him, even had she married him. But the shattering of the false image might have done John Eames a good turn. Lily knew that she had at any rate full permission from all her friends to throw in her lot with his,—if she could persuade herself to do so. Mother, uncle, sister, brother-in-law, cousin,—and now this new cousin's bride that was to be,—together with Lady Julia and a whole crowd of Allington and Guestwick friends, were in favour of such a marriage. There had been nothing against it but the fact that the other man had been dearer to her; and that other fact that poor Johnny lacked something,—something of earnestness, something of manliness, something of that Phæbus divinity with which Crosbie had contrived to invest his own image. But, as I have said above, John had gradually grown, if not into divinity, at least into manliness; and the shattering of the false image had done him yeoman's service. Now had come this accursed letter, and Lily, despite herself, despite her better judgment, could not sweep it away from her mind and make the letter as nothing to her. M. D. had promised not to interfere with her! There was no room for such interference, no possibility that such interference should take place. She hoped earnestly,—so she told herself,

—that her old friend John Eames might have nothing to do with a woman so impudent and vulgar as must be this M. D.; but except as regarded old friendship, M. D. and John Eames, apart or together, could be as nothing to her. Therefore, I say that the letter had had the effect which the writer of it had desired.

All London was new to Lily Dale, and Mrs. Thorne was very anxious to show her everything that could be seen. She was to return to Allington before the flowers of May would have come, and the crowd and the glare and the fashion and the art of the Academy's great exhibition must therefore remain unknown to her; but she was taken to see many pictures, and among others she was taken to see the pictures belonging to a certain nobleman who, with that munificence which is so amply enjoyed and so little recognised in England, keeps open house for the world to see the treasures which the wealth of his family has collected. The necessary order was procured, and on a certain brilliant April afternoon Mrs. Thorne and her party found themselves in this nobleman's drawing-room. Lily was with her, of course, and Emily Dunstable was there, and Bernard Dale, and Mrs. Thorne's dear friend Mrs. Harold Smith, and Mrs. Thorne's constant and useful attendant, Siph Dunn. They had nearly completed their delightful but wearying task of gazing at pictures, and Mrs. Harold Smith had declared that she would not look at another painting till the exhibition was open; three of the ladies were seated in the drawing-room, and Siph Dunn was standing before them, lecturing about art as though he had been brought up on the ancient masters; Emily and Bernard were lingering behind, and the others were simply delaying their de-

parture till the truant lovers should have caught them. At this moment two gentlemen entered the room from the gallery, and the two gentlemen were Fowler Pratt and Adolphus Crosbie.

All the party except Mrs. Thorne knew Crosbie personally, and all of them except Mrs. Harold Smith knew something of the story of what had occurred between Crosbie and Lily. Siph Dunn had learned it all since the meeting in the Park, having nearly learned it all from what he had seen there with his eyes. But Mrs. Thorne, who knew Lily's story, did not know Crosbie's appearance. But there was his friend Fowler Pratt, who, as will be remembered, had dined with her but the other day; and she, with that outspoken and somewhat loud impulse which was natural to her, addressed him at once across the room, calling him by name. Had she not done so, the two men might probably have escaped through the room, in which case they would have met Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable in the doorway. Fowler Pratt would have endeavoured so to escape, and to carry Crosbie with him, as he was quite alive to the expedience of saving Lily from such a meeting. But, as things turned out, escape from Mrs. Thorne was impossible.

"There 's Fowler Pratt," she had said when they first entered, quite loud enough for Fowler Pratt to hear her. "Mr. Pratt, come here. How d'ye do? You dined with me last Tuesday, and you 've never been to call."

"I never recognise that obligation till after the middle of May," said Mr. Pratt, shaking hands with Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Smith, and bowing to Miss Dale.

"I don't see the justice of that at all," said Mrs.

Thorne. "It seems to me that a good dinner is as much entitled to a morsel of pasteboard in April as at any other time. You won't have another till you have called,—unless you 're specially wanted."

Crosbie would have gone on, but that in his attempt to do so he passed close by the chair on which Mrs. Harold Smith was sitting, and that he was accosted by her. "Mr. Crosbie," she said, "I have n't seen you for an age. Has it come to pass that you have buried yourself entirely?" He did not know how to extricate himself so as to move on at once. He paused, and hesitated, and then stopped, and made an attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith as though he were at his ease. The attempt was anything but successful; but having once stopped, he did not know how to put himself in motion again, so that he might escape. At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable came up and joined the group; but neither of them had discovered who Crosbie was till they were close upon him.

Lily was seated between Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Smith, and Siph Dunn had been standing immediately opposite to them. Fowler Pratt, who had been drawn into the circle against his will, was now standing close to Dunn, almost between him and Lily,—and Crosbie was standing within two yards of Lily, on the other side of Dunn. Emily and Bernard had gone behind Pratt and Crosbie to Mrs. Thorne's side before they had recognised the two men;—and in this way Lily was completely surrounded. Mrs. Thorne, who, in spite of her eager, impetuous ways, was as thoughtful of others as any woman could be, as soon as she heard Crosbie's name understood it all, and knew that it would be well that she should withdraw Lily from her

plight. Crosbie, in his attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith, had smiled and simpered,—and had then felt that to smile and simper before Lily Dale, with a pretended indifference to her presence, was false on his part, and would seem to be mean. He would have avoided Lily for both their sakes, had it been possible; but it was no longer possible, and he could not keep his eyes from her face. Hardly knowing what he did, he bowed to her, lifted his hat, and uttered some word of greeting.

Lily, from the moment that she had perceived his presence, had looked straight before her, with something almost of fierceness in her eyes. Both Pratt and Siph Dunn had observed her narrowly. It had seemed as though Crosbie had been altogether outside the ken of her eyes, or the notice of her ears, and yet she had seen every motion of his body, and had heard every word which had fallen from his lips. Now when he saluted her, she turned her face full upon him, and bowed to him. Then she rose from her seat, and made her way, between Siph Dunn and Pratt, out of the circle. The blood had mounted to her face and suffused it all, and her whole manner was such that it could escape the observation of none who stood there. Even Mrs. Harold Smith had seen it, and had read the story. As soon as she was on her feet, Bernard had dropped Emily's hand, and offered his arm to his cousin. "Lily," he had said out loud, "you had better let me take you away. It is a misfortune that you have been subjected to the insult of such a greeting." Bernard and Crosbie had been early friends, and Bernard had been the unfortunate means of bringing Crosbie and Lily together. Up to this day, Bernard had never had

his revenge for the ill-treatment which his cousin had received. Some morsel of that revenge came to him now. Lily almost hated her cousin for what he said; but she took his arm, and walked with him from the room. It must be acknowledged, in excuse for Bernard Dale, and as an apology for the apparent indiscretion of his words, that all the circumstances of the meeting had become apparent to every one there. The misfortune of the encounter had become too plain to admit of its being hidden under any of the ordinary veils of society. Crosbie's salutation had been made before the eyes of them all, and in the midst of absolute silence, and Lily had risen with so queen-like a demeanour, and had moved with so stately a step, that it was impossible that any one concerned should pretend to ignore the facts of the scene that had occurred. Crosbie was still standing close to Mrs. Harold Smith, Mrs. Thorne had risen from her seat, and the words which Bernard Dale had uttered were still sounding in the ears of them all. "Shall I see after the carriage?" said Siph Dunn. "Do," said Mrs. Thorne; "or, stay a moment; the carriage will of course be there, and we will go together. Good-morning, Mr. Pratt. I expect that, at any rate, you will send me your card by post." Then they all passed on, and Crosbie and Fowler Pratt were left among the pictures.

"I think you will agree with me now that you had better give her up," said Fowler Pratt.

"I will never give her up," said Crosbie, "till I shall hear that she has married some one else."

"You may take my word for it, that she will never marry you after what has just now occurred."

"Very likely not; but still the attempt, even the idea of the attempt, will be a comfort to me. I shall be endeavouring to do that which I ought to have done."

"What you have got to think of, I should suppose, is her comfort,—not your own."

Crosbie stood for a while silent, looking at a portrait which was hung just within the doorway of a smaller room into which they had passed, as though his attention were entirely riveted by the picture. But he was thinking of the picture not at all, and did not even know what kind of painting was on the canvas before him. "Pratt," he said at last, "you are always hard to me."

"I will say nothing more to you on the subject, if you wish me to be silent."

"I do wish you to be silent about that."

"That shall be enough," said Pratt.

"You do not quite understand me. You do not know how thoroughly I have repented of the evil that I have done, or how far I would go to make retribution, if retribution were possible!" Fowler Pratt, having been told to hold his tongue as regarded that subject, made no reply to this, and began to talk about the pictures.

Lily, leaning on her cousin's arm, was out in the courtyard in front of the house before Mrs. Thorne or Siph Dunn. It was but for a minute, but still there was a minute in which Bernard felt that he ought to say a word to her. "I hope you are not angry with me, Lily, for having spoken?"

"I wish, of course, that you had not spoken; but I

am not angry. I have no right to be angry. I made the misfortune for myself. Do not say anything more about it, dear Bernard;—that is all."

They had walked to the picture-gallery; but, by agreement, two carriages had come to take them away,—Mrs. Thorne's and Mrs. Harold Smith's. Mrs. Thorne easily managed to send Emily Dunstable and Bernard away with her friend, and to tell Siph Dunn that he must manage for himself. In this way it was contrived that no one but Mrs. Thorne should be with Lily Dale.

"My dear," said Mrs. Thorne, "it seemed to me that you were a little put out, and so I thought it best to send them all away."

"It was very kind."

"He ought to have passed on and not to have stood an instant when he saw you," said Mrs. Thorne, with indignation. "There are moments when it is a man's duty simply to vanish, to melt into the air, or to sink into the ground,—in which he is bound to overcome the difficulties of such sudden self-removal, or must ever after be accounted poor and mean."

"I did not want him to vanish;—if only he had not spoken to me."

"He should have vanished. A man is sometimes bound in honour to do so, even when he himself has done nothing wrong;—when the sin has been all with the woman. Her femininity has still a right to expect that so much shall be done in its behalf. But when the sin has been all his own, as it was in this case,—and such damning sin, too——"

"Pray do not go on, Mrs. Thorne."

"He ought to go out and hang himself simply for

having allowed himself to be seen. I thought Bernard behaved very well, and I shall tell him so."

"I wish you could manage to forget it all, and say no word more about it."

"I won't trouble you with it, my dear; I will promise you that. But, Lily, I can hardly understand you. This man, who must have been and must ever be a brute——"

"Mrs. Thorne, you promised me this instant that you would not talk of him."

"After this I will not; but you must let me have my way now for one moment. I have so often longed to speak to you, but have not done so from fear of offending you. Now the matter has come up by chance, and it was impossible that what has occurred should pass by without a word. I cannot conceive why the memory of that bad man should be allowed to destroy your whole life."

"My life is not destroyed. My life is anything but destroyed. It is a very happy life."

"But, my dear, if all that I hear is true, there is a most estimable young man, whom everybody likes, and particularly all your own family, and whom you like very much yourself; and you will have nothing to say to him, though his constancy is like the constancy of an old Paladin,—and all because of this wretch who just now came in your way."

"Mrs. Thorne, it is impossible to explain it all."

"I do not want you to explain it all. Of course I would not ask any young woman to marry a man whom she did not love. Such marriages are abominable to me. But I think that a young woman ought to get married if the thing fairly comes in her way,

and if her friends approve, and if she is fond of the man who is fond of her. It may be that some memory of what has gone before is allowed to stand in your way, and that it should not be so allowed. It sometimes happens that a morbid sentiment will destroy a life. Excuse me, then, Lily, if I say too much to you in my hope that you may not suffer after this fashion."

"I know how kind you are, Mrs. Thorne."

"Here we are at home, and perhaps you would like to go in. I have some calls which I must make." Then the conversation was ended, and Lily was alone.

As if she had not thought of it all before! As if there was anything new in this counsel which Mrs. Thorne had given her! She had received the same advice from her mother, from her sister, from her uncle, and from Lady Julia, till she was sick of it. How had it come to pass that matters which with others are so private, should with her have become the public property of so large a circle? Any other girl would receive advice on such a subject from her mother alone, and there the secret would rest. But her secret had been published, as it were, by the town-crier in the High Street! Everybody knew that she had been jilted by Adolphus Crosbie, and that it was intended that she should be consoled by John Eames. And people seemed to think that they had a right to rebuke her if she expressed an unwillingness to carry out this intention which the public had so kindly arranged for her.

Morbid sentiment! Why should she be accused of morbid sentiment because she was unable to transfer her affections to the man who had been fixed on as her

future husband by the large circle of acquaintance who had interested themselves in her affairs? There was nothing morbid in either her desires or her regrets. So she assured herself, with something very like anger at the accusation made against her. She had been contented, and was contented, to live at home as her mother lived, asking for no excitement beyond that given by the daily routine of her duties. There could be nothing morbid in that. She would go back to Allington as soon as might be, and have done with this London life, which only made her wretched. This seeing of Crosbie had been terrible to her. She did not tell herself that his image had been shattered. Her idea was that all her misery had come from the untowardness of the meeting. But there was the fact that she had seen the man and heard his voice, and that the seeing him and hearing him had made her miserable. She certainly desired that it might never be her lot either to see him or to hear him again.

And as for John Eames,—in those bitter moments of her reflection she almost wished the same in regard to him. If he would only cease to be her lover, he might be very well; but he was not very well to her as long as his pretensions were dinned into her ear by everybody who knew her. And then she told herself that John would have had a better chance if he had been content to plead for himself. In this, I think, she was hard upon her lover. He had pleaded for himself as well as he knew how, and as often as the occasion had been given to him. It had hardly been his fault that his case had been taken in hand by other advocates. He had given no commission to Mrs. Thorne to plead for him.

Poor Johnny! He had stood in much better favour before the lady had presented her compliments to Miss L. D. It was that odious letter, and the thoughts which it had forced upon Lily's mind, which were now most inimical to his interests. Whether Lily loved him or not, she did not love him well enough not to be jealous of him. Had any such letter reached her respecting Crosbie in the happy days of her young love, she would simply have laughed at it. It would have been nothing to her. But now she was sore and unhappy, and any trifle was powerful enough to irritate her. "Is Miss L. D. engaged to marry Mr. J. E.?" "No," said Lily, out loud. "Lily Dale is not engaged to marry John Eames, and never will be so engaged." She was almost tempted to sit down and write the required answer to Miss M. D. Though the letter had been destroyed, she well remembered the number of the post-office in the Edgeware Road. Poor John Eames!

That evening she told Emily Dunstable that she thought she would like to return to Allington before the day that had been appointed for her. "But why," said Emily, "should you be worse than your word?"

"I dare say it will seem silly, but the fact is I am homesick. I 'm not accustomed to be away from mamma for so long."

"I hope it is not what occurred to-day at the picture-gallery."

"I won't deny that it is that in part."

"That was a strange accident, you know, that might never occur again."

"It has occurred twice already, Emily."

"I don't call the affair in the Park anything. Anybody may see anybody else in the Park, of course.

He was not brought so near you that he could annoy you there. You ought certainly to wait till Mr. Eames has come back from Italy."

Then Lily declared that she must and would go back to Allington on the next Monday, and she actually did write a letter to her mother that night to say that such was her intention. But on the morrow her heart was less sore, and the letter was not sent.

CHAPTER V.

THE END OF JAEL AND SISERA.

THERE was to be one more sitting for the picture, as the reader will remember, and the day for that sitting had arrived. Conway Dalrymple, had, in the mean time, called at Mrs. Van Siever's house, hoping that he might be able to see Clara, and make his offer to her there. But he had failed in his attempt to reach her. He had found it impossible to say all that he had to say in the painting-room, during the very short intervals which Mrs. Broughton left to him. A man should be allowed to be alone more than fifteen minutes with a young lady on the occasion in which he offers to her his hand and his heart; but hitherto he had never really had more than twelve minutes at his command; and then there had been the turban! He had also, in the mean time, called on Mrs. Broughton, with the intention of explaining to her that, if she really intended to favour his views in respect to Miss Van Siever, she ought to give him a little more liberty for expressing himself. On this occasion he had seen his friend, but had not been able to go as minutely as he had wished into the matter that was so important to himself. Mrs. Broughton had found it necessary during this meeting to talk almost exclusively about herself and her own affairs. "Conway," she had said,

directly she saw him, "I am so glad you have come. I think I should have gone mad if I had not seen some one who cares for me." This was early in the morning, not much after eleven, and Mrs. Broughton, hearing first his knock at the door, and then his voice, had met him in the hall and taken him into the dining-room.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, Conway!"

"What is it? Has anything gone wrong with Dobbs?"

"Everything has gone wrong with him. He is ruined."

"Heaven and earth! What do you mean?"

"Simply what I say. But you must not speak a word of it. I do not know it from himself."

"How do you know it?"

"Wait a moment. Sit down there, will you?—and I will sit by you. No, Conway; do not take my hand. It is not right. There;—so. Yesterday Mrs. Van Siever was here. I need not tell you all that she said to me, even if I could. She was very harsh and cruel, saying all manner of things about Dobbs. How can I help it, if he drinks? I have not encouraged him. And as for expensive living, I have been as ignorant as a child. I have never asked for anything. When we were married somebody told me how much we should have to spend. It was either two thousand, or three thousand, or four thousand, or something like that. You know, Conway, how ignorant I am about money;—that I am like a child. Is it not true?" She waited for an answer, and Dalrymple was obliged to acknowledge that it was true. And yet he had

known the times in which his dear friend had been very sharp in her memory with reference to a few pounds. "And now she says that Dobbs owes her money which he cannot pay her, and that everything must be sold. She says that Musselboro must have the business, and that Dobbs must shift for himself elsewhere."

"Do you believe that she has the power to decide that things shall go this way or that,—as she pleases?"

"How am I to know? She says so, and she says it is because he drinks. He does drink. That at least is true. But how can I help it? Oh, Conway, what am I to do? Dobbs did not come home at all last night, but sent for his things,—saying that he must stay in the City. What am I to do if they come and take the house, and sell the furniture, and turn me out into the street?" Then the poor creature began to cry in earnest, and Dalrymple had to console her as best he might. "How I wish I had known you first," she said. To this Dalrymple was able to make no direct answer. He was wise enough to know that a direct answer might possibly lead him into terrible trouble. He was by no means anxious to find himself "protecting" Mrs. Dobbs Broughton from the ruin which her husband had brought upon her.

Before he left her she had told him a long story, partly of matters of which he had known something before, and partly made up of that which she had heard from the old woman. It was settled, Mrs. Broughton said, that Mr. Musselboro was to marry Clara Van Siever. But it appeared, as far as Dalrymple could learn, that this was a settlement made simply between Mrs. Van Siever and Musselboro.

Clara, as he thought, was not a girl likely to fall into such a settlement without having an opinion of her own. Musselboro was to have the business, and Dobbs Broughton was to be "sold up," and then look for employment in the City. From her husband the wife had not heard a word on this matter, and the above story was simply what had been told to Mrs. Broughton by Mrs. Van Siever. "For myself it seems that there can be but one fate," said Mrs. Broughton. Dalrymple, in his tenderest voice, asked what that one fate must be. "Never mind," said Mrs. Broughton. "There are some things which one cannot tell even to such a friend as you." He was sitting near her and had all but got his arm behind her waist. He was, however, able to be prudent. "Maria," he said, getting up on his feet, "if it should really come about that you should want anything, you will send to me. You will promise me that, at any rate?" She rubbed a tear from her eye and said that she did not know. "There are moments in which a man must speak plainly," said Conway Dalrymple;—"in which it would be unmanly not to do so, however prosaic it may seem. I need hardly tell you that my purse shall be yours if you want it." But just at that moment she did not want his purse, nor must it be supposed that she wanted to run away with him and to leave her husband to fight the battle alone with Mrs. Van Siever. The truth was that she did not know what she wanted, over and beyond an assurance from Conway Dalrymple that she was the most ill-used, the most interesting, and the most beautiful woman ever heard of, either in history or romance. Had he proposed to her to pack up a bundle and go off with him in a cab to the London,

Chatham, and Dover railway station, en route for Boulogne, I do not for a moment think that she would have packed up her bundle. She would have received intense gratification from the offer,—so much so that she would have been almost consoled for her husband's ruin; but she would have scolded her lover, and would have explained to him the great iniquity of which he was guilty.

It was clear to him that at this present time he could not make any special terms with her as to Clara Van Siever. At such a moment as this he could hardly ask her to keep out of the way, in order that he might have his opportunity. But when he suggested that probably it might be better, in the present emergency, to give up the idea of any further sitting in her room, and proposed to send for his canvas, colour-box, and easel, she told him that, as far as she was concerned, he was welcome to have that one other sitting for which they had all bargained. "You had better come to-morrow, as we had agreed," she said; "and unless I shall have been turned out into the street by the creditors, you may have the room as you did before. And you must remember, Conway, that though Mrs. Van says that Musselboro is to have Clara, it does n't follow that Clara should give way." When we consider everything, we must acknowledge that this was, at any rate, good-natured. Then there was a tender parting, with many tears, and Conway Dalrymple escaped from the house.

He did not for a moment doubt the truth of the story which Mrs. Broughton had told, as far, at least, as it referred to the ruin of Dobbs Broughton. He had heard something of this before, and for some weeks

had expected that a crash was coming. Broughton's rise had been very sudden, and Dalrymple had never regarded his friend as firmly placed in the commercial world. Dobbs was one of those men who seem born to surprise the world by a spurt of prosperity, and might, perhaps, have had a second spurt, or even a third, could he have kept himself from drinking in the morning. But Dalrymple, though he was hardly astonished by the story as it regarded Broughton, was put out by that part of it which had reference to Musselboro. He had known that Musselboro had been introduced to Broughton by Mrs. Van Siever; but, nevertheless, he had regarded the man as being no more than Broughton's clerk. And now he was told that Musselboro was to marry Clara Van Siever, and have all Mrs. Van Siever's money. He resolved, at last, that he would run his risk about the money, and take Clara either with or without it, if she would have him. And as for that difficulty in asking her, if Mrs. Broughton would give him no opportunity of putting the question behind her back, he would put it before her face. He had not much leisure for consideration on these points, as the next day was the day for the last sitting.

On the following morning he found Miss Van Siever already seated in Mrs. Broughton's room when he reached it. And at the moment Mrs. Broughton was not there. As he took Clara's hand, he could not prevent himself from asking her whether she had heard anything? "Heard what?" said Clara. "Then you have not," said he. "Never mind now, as Mrs. Broughton is here." Then Mrs. Broughton had entered the room. She seemed to be quite cheerful, but

Dalrymple perfectly understood, from a special glance which she gave to him, that he was to perceive that her cheerfulness was assumed for Clara's benefit. Mrs. Broughton was showing how great a heroine she could be on behalf of her friends. "Now, my dear," she said, "do remember that this is the last day. It may be all very well, Conway, and, of course, you know best; but, as far as I can see, you have not made half as much progress as you ought to have done." "We shall do excellently well," said Dalrymple. "So much the better," said Mrs. Broughton; "and now, Clara, I 'll place you." And so Clara was placed on her knees, with the turban on her head.

Dalrymple began his work assiduously, knowing that Mrs. Broughton would not leave the room for some minutes. It was certain that she would remain for a quarter of an hour, and it might be as well that he should really use that time on his picture. The peculiar position in which he was placed probably made his work difficult to him. There was something perplexing in the necessity which bound him to look upon the young lady before him both as Jael and as the future Mrs. Conway Dalrymple, knowing as he did that she was at present simply Clara Van Siever. A double personification was not difficult to him. He had encountered it with every model that had sat to him, and with every young lady he had attempted to win,—if he had ever made such an attempt with one before. But the triple character, joined to the necessity of the double work, was distressing to him. "The hand a little further back, if you don't mind," he said, "and the wrist more turned towards me. That is just it. Lean a little more over him. There—that will do

exactly." If Mrs. Broughton did not go very quickly he must begin to address his model on a totally different subject, even while she was in the act of slaying Sisera.

"Have you made up your mind who is to be Sisera?" asked Mrs. Broughton.

"I think I shall put in my own face," said Dalrymple; "if Miss Van Siever does not object."

"Not in the least," said Clara, speaking without moving her face—almost without moving her lips.

"That will be excellent," said Mrs. Broughton. She was still quite cheerful, and really laughed as she spoke. "Shall you like the idea, Clara, of striking the nail right through his head?"

"Oh, yes; as well his head as another's. I shall seem to be having my revenge for all the trouble he has given me."

There was a slight pause, and then Dalrymple spoke. "You have had that already, in striking me right through the heart."

"What a very pretty speech! Was it not, my dear?" said Mrs. Broughton. And then Mrs. Broughton laughed. There was something slightly hysterical in her laugh which grated on Dalrymple's ears,—something which seemed to tell him that at the present moment his dear friend was not going to assist him honestly in his effort.

"Only that I should put him out, I would get up and make a curtsey," said Clara. No young lady could ever talk of making a curtsey for such a speech if she supposed it to have been made in earnestness. And Clara, no doubt, understood that a man might make a hundred such speeches in the presence of a

third person without any danger that they would be taken as meaning anything. All this Dalrymple knew, and began to think that he had better put down his palette and brush, and do the work which he had before him in the most prosaic language that he could use. He could, at any rate, succeed in making Clara acknowledge his intention in this way. He waited still for a minute or two, and it seemed to him that Mrs. Broughton had no intention of piling her fagots on the present occasion. It might be that the remembrance of her husband's ruin prevented her from sacrificing herself in the other direction also.

"I am not very good at pretty speeches, but I am good at telling the truth," said Dalrymple.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mrs. Broughton, still with a touch of hysterical action in her throat. "Upon my word, Conway, you know how to praise yourself."

"He dispraises himself most unnecessarily in denying the prettiness of his language," said Clara. As she spoke she hardly moved her lips, and Dalrymple went on painting from the model. It was clear that Miss Van Siever understood that the painting, and not the pretty speeches, was the important business on hand.

Mrs. Broughton had now tucked her feet up on the sofa, and was gazing at the artist as he stood at his work. Dalrymple, remembering how he had offered her his purse,—an offer which, in the existing crisis of her affairs, might mean a great deal,—felt that she was ill-natured. Had she intended to do him a good turn, she would have gone now; but there she lay, with her feet tucked up, clearly purposing to be present through the whole of that morning's sitting. His anger against

her added something to his spirit, and made him determine that he would carry out his purpose. Suddenly, therefore, he prepared himself for action.

He was in the habit of working with a Turkish cap on his head, and with a short apron tied round him. There was something picturesque about the cap, which might not have been incongruous with love-making. It is easy to suppose that Juan wore a Turkish cap, when he sat with Haidee in Lambro's island. But we may be quite sure that he did not wear an apron. Now Dalrymple had thought of all this and had made up his mind to work to-day without his apron; but when arranging his easel and his brushes, he had put it on from force of habit, and was now disgusted with himself as he remembered it. He put down his brush, divested his thumb of his palette, then took off his cap, and after that untied the apron.

"Conway, what are you going to do?" said Mrs. Broughton.

"I am going to ask Clara Van Siever to be my wife," said Dalrymple. At that moment the door was opened, and Mrs. Van Siever entered the room.

Clara had not risen from her kneeling posture when Dalrymple began to put off his trappings. She had not seen what he was doing as plainly as Mrs. Broughton had done, having her attention naturally drawn towards her Sisera; and, besides this, she understood that she was to remain as she was placed till orders to move were given to her. Dalrymple would occasionally step aside from his easel to look at her in some altered light, and on such occasions she would simply hold her hammer somewhat more tightly than before. When, therefore, Mrs. Van Siever entered

the room Clara was still slaying Sisera, in spite of the artist's speech. The speech, indeed, and her mother both seemed to come to her at the same time. The old woman stood for a moment, holding the open door in her hand. "You fool!" she said, "what are you doing there, dressed up in that way like a guy?" Then Clara got up from her feet and stood before her mother in Jael's dress and Jael's turban. Dalrymple thought that the dress and turban did not become her badly. Mrs. Van Siever apparently thought otherwise. "Will you have the goodness to tell me, miss, why you are dressed up after that Mad Bess of Bedlam fashion?"

The reader will no doubt bear in mind that Clara had other words of which to think besides those which were addressed to her by her mother. Dalrymple had asked her to be his wife in the plainest possible language, and she thought that the very plainness of the language became him well. The very taking off of his apron, almost as he said the words, though to himself the action had been so distressing as almost to overcome his purpose, had in it something to her of direct simple determination which pleased her. When he had spoken of having had a nail driven by her right through his heart, she had not been in the least gratified; but the taking off of the apron, and the putting down of the palette, and the downright way in which he had called her Clara Van Siever,—attempting to be neither sentimental with Clara, nor polite with Miss Van Siever,—did please her. She had often said to herself that she would never give a plain answer to a man who did not ask her a plain question;—to a man who, in asking this question, did not say plainly to her,

"Clara Van Siever, will you become Mrs. Jones?"—or Mrs. Smith, or Mrs. Tomkins, as the case might be. Now Conway Dalrymple had asked her to become Mrs. Dalrymple very much after this fashion. In spite of the apparition of her mother, all this had passed through her mind. Not the less, however, was she obliged to answer her mother, before she could give any reply to the other questioner. In the mean time Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had untucked her feet.

"Mamma," said Clara, "who ever expected to see you here?"

"I dare say nobody did," said Mrs. Van Siever; "but here I am, nevertheless."

"Madam," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, "you might at any rate have gone through the ceremony of having yourself announced by the servant."

"Madam," said the old woman, attempting to mimic the tone of the other, "I thought that on such a very particular occasion as this I might be allowed to announce myself. You tomfool, you, why don't you take that turban off?" Then Clara, with slow and graceful motion, unwound the turban. If Dalrymple really meant what he had said, and would stick to it, she need not mind being called a tomfool by her mother.

"Conway, I am afraid that our last sitting is disturbed," said Mrs. Broughton, with a little laugh.

"Conway's last sitting certainly is disturbed," said Mrs. Van Siever, and then she mimicked the laugh. "And you 'll all be disturbed,—I can tell you that. What an ass you must be to go on with this kind of thing after what I said to you yesterday! Do you know that he got beastly drunk in the City last night,

and that he is drunk now, while you are going on with your tomfooleries?" Upon hearing this, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton fainted into Dalrymple's arms.

Hitherto the artist had not said a word, and had hardly known what part it would best become him now to play. If he intended to marry Clara,—and he certainly did intend to marry her if she would have him,—it might be as well not to quarrel with Mrs. Van Siever. At any rate there was nothing in Mrs. Van Siever's intrusion, disagreeable as it was, which need make him take up his sword to do battle with her. But now, as he held Mrs. Broughton in his arms, and as the horrid words which the old woman had spoken rung in his ears, he could not refrain himself from uttering reproach. "You ought not to have told her in this way, before other people, even if it be true," said Conway.

"Leave me to be my own judge of what I ought to do, if you please, sir. If she had any feeling at all, what I told her yesterday would have kept her from all this. But some people have no feeling, and will go on being tomfools though the house is on fire." As these words were spoken, Mrs. Broughton fainted more persistently than ever,—so that Dalrymple was convinced that whether she felt or not, at any rate she heard. He had now dragged her across the room, and laid her upon the sofa, and Clara had come to her assistance. "I dare say you think me very hard because I speak plainly, but there are things much harder than plain speaking. How much do you expect to be paid, sir, for this picture of my girl?"

"I do not expect to be paid for it at all," said Dalrymple.

"And whom is it to belong to?"

"It belongs to me at present."

"Then, sir, it must n't belong to you any longer. It won't do for you to have a picture of my girl to hang up in your painting-room for all your friends to come and make their jokes about, nor yet to make a show of it in any of your exhibitions. My daughter has been a fool, and I can't help it. If you 'll tell me what 's the cost, I 'll pay you; then I 'll have the picture home, and I'll treat it as it deserves."

Dalrymple thought for a moment about his picture and about Mrs. Van Siever. What had he better do? He wanted to behave well, and he felt that the old woman had something of justice on her side. "Madam," he said, "I will not sell this picture; but it shall be destroyed if you wish it."

"I certainly do wish it, but I won't trust to you. If it 's not sent to my house at once you 'll hear from me through my lawyers."

Then Dalrymple deliberately opened his penknife and slit the canvas across, through the middle of the picture each way. Clara, as she saw him do it, felt that in truth she loved him. "There, Mrs. Van Siever," he said; "now you can take the bits home with you in your basket if you wish it." At this moment, as the rent canvas fell and fluttered upon the stretcher, there came a loud voice of lamentation from the sofa,—a groan of despair and a shriek of wrath. "Very fine indeed," said Mrs. Van Siever. "When ladies faint they always ought to have their eyes about them. I see that Mrs. Broughton understands that."

"Take her away, Conway,—for God's sake take her away," said Mrs. Broughton.

"I shall take myself away very shortly," said Mrs. Van Siever, "so you need n't trouble Mr. Conway about that. Not but what I thought the gentleman's name was Mr. something else."

"My name is Conway Dalrymple," said the artist.

"Then I suppose you must be her brother, or her cousin, or something of that sort?" said Mrs. Van Siever.

"Take her away," screamed Mrs. Dobbs Broughton.

"Wait a moment, madam. As you 've chopped up your handiwork there, Mr. Conway Dalrymple, and as I suppose my daughter has been more to blame than anybody else——"

"She has not been to blame at all," said Dalrymple.

"That 's my affair, and not yours," said Mrs. Van Siever, very sharply. "But as you 've been at all this trouble, and have now chopped it up, I don't mind paying you for your time and paints. Only I shall be glad to know how much it will come to?"

"There will be nothing to pay, Mrs. Van Siever."

"How long has he been at it, Clara?"

"Mamma, indeed you had better not say anything about paying him."

"I shall say whatever I please, miss. Will ten pounds do it, sir?"

"If you choose to buy the picture, the price will be seven hundred and fifty," said Dalrymple, with a smile, pointing to the fragments.

"Seven hundred and fifty pounds?" said the old woman.

"But I strongly advise you not to make the purchase," said Dalrymple.

"Seven hundred and fifty pounds! I certainly shall not give you seven hundred and fifty pounds, sir."

"I certainly think you could invest your money better, Mrs. Van Siever. But if the thing is to be sold at all, that is my price. I 've thought that there was some justice in your demand that it should be destroyed,—and therefore I have destroyed it."

Mrs. Van Siever had been standing on the same spot ever since she had entered the room, and now she turned round to leave the room.

"If you have any demand to make, I beg that you will send in your account for work done to Mr. Musselboro. He is my man of business. Clara, are you ready to come home? The cab is waiting at the door, —at sixpence the quarter of an hour, if you will be pleased to remember."

"Mrs. Broughton," said Clara, thoughtful of her raiment, and remembering that it might not be well that she should return home, even in a cab, dressed as Jael, "if you will allow me, I will go into your room for a minute or two."

"Certainly, Clara," said Mrs. Broughton, preparing to accompany her.

"But before you go, Mrs. Broughton," said Mrs. Van Siever, "it may be as well that I should tell you that my daughter is going to become the wife of Mr. Musselboro. It may simplify matters that you should know this." And Mrs. Van Siever, as she spoke, looked hard at Conway Dalrymple.

"Mamma!" exclaimed Clara.

"My dear," said Mrs. Van Siever, "you had better change your dress, and come away with me."

"Not till I have protested against what you have said, mamma."

"You had better leave your protesting alone, I can tell you."

"Mrs. Broughton," continued Clara, "I must beg you to understand that mamma has not the slightest right in the world to tell you what she has just now said about me. Nothing on earth would induce me to become the wife of Mr. Broughton's partner." There was something which made Clara unwilling even to name the man whom her mother had publicly proposed as her future husband.

"He is n't Mr. Broughton's partner," said Mrs. Van Siever. "Mr. Broughton has not got a partner. Mr. Musselboro is the head of the firm. And as to your marrying him, of course I can't make you."

"No, mamma; you cannot."

"Mrs. Broughton understands that, no doubt;—and so, probably, does Mr. Dalrymple. I only tell them what are my ideas. If you choose to marry the sweep at the crossing, I can't help it. Only I don't see what good you would do the sweep, when he would have to sweep for himself and you too. At any rate, I suppose you mean to go home with me now?" Then Mrs. Broughton and Clara left the room, and Mrs. Van Siever was left with Conway Dalrymple. "Mr. Dalrymple," said Mrs. Van Siever, "do not deceive yourself. What I told you just now will certainly come to pass."

"It seems to me that that must depend on the young lady," said Dalrymple.

"I 'll tell you what certainly will not depend on the young lady," said Mrs. Van Siever; "and that is

whether the man who marries her will have more with her than the clothes she stands up in. You will understand that argument, I suppose?"

"I 'm not quite sure that I do," said Dalrymple.

"Then you 'd better try to understand it. Good-morning, sir. I 'm sorry you 've had to slit your picture." Then she curtseyed low, and walked out onto the landing-place. "Clara," she cried, "I 'm waiting for you,—sixpence a quarter of an hour,—remember that." In a minute or two Clara came out to her, and then Mrs. Van Siever and Miss Van Siever took their departure.

"Oh, Conway, what am I to do? what am I to do?" said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. Dalrymple stood perplexed for a few minutes, and could not tell her what she was to do. She was in such a position that it was very hard to tell her what to do. "Do you believe, Conway, that he is really ruined?"

"What am I to say? How am I to know?"

"I see that you believe it," said the wretched woman.

"I cannot but believe that there is something of truth in what this woman says. Why else should she come here with such a story?" Then there was a pause, during which Mrs. Broughton was burying her face on the arm of the sofa. "I 'll tell you what I 'll do," continued he. "I 'll go into the City and make inquiry. It can hardly be but what I shall learn the truth there."

Then there was another pause, at the end of which Mrs. Broughton got up from the sofa. "Tell me," said she;—"what do you mean to do about that girl?"

"You heard me ask her to be my wife."

"I did! I did!"

"Is it not what you intended?"

"Do not ask me. My mind is bewildered. My brain is on fire! Oh, Conway!"

"Shall I go into the City as I proposed?" said Dalrymple, who felt that he might, at any rate, improve the position of circumstances by leaving the house.

"Yes;—yes; go into the City! Go anywhere. Go. But stay! Oh, Conway!" There was a sudden change in her voice as she spoke. "Hark,—there he is, as sure as life." Then Conway listened, and heard a footstep on the stairs, as to which he had then but little doubt that it was the footstep of Dobbs Broughton. "O heavens! he is tipsy!" exclaimed Mrs. Broughton; "and what shall we do?" Then Dalrymple took her hand and pressed it, and left the room, so that he might meet the husband on the stairs. In the one moment that he had for reflection he thought it was better that there should be no concealment.

CHAPTER VI.

"IT'S DOGGED AS DOES IT."

In accordance with the resolution to which the clerical commission had come on the first day of their sitting, Dr. Tempest wrote the following letter to Mr. Crawley:—

"Rectory, Silverbridge, April 9, 186—.

"Dear Sir,—I have been given to understand that you have been informed that the Bishop of Barchester has appointed a commission of clergymen of the diocese to make inquiry respecting certain accusations which, to the regret of us all, have been made against you, in respect to a cheque for twenty pounds which was passed by you to a tradesman in this town. The clergymen appointed to form this commission are Mr. Oriel, the rector of Greshamsbury, Mr. Robarts, the vicar of Framley, Mr. Quiverful, the warden of Hiram's Hospital at Barchester, Mr. Thumble, a clergyman established in that city, and myself. We held our first meeting on last Monday, and I now write to you in compliance with a resolution to which we then came. Before taking any other steps we thought it best to ask you to attend us here on next Monday, at two o'clock, and I beg that you will accept this letter as an invitation to that effect.

"We are, of course, aware that you are about to

stand your trial at the next assizes for the offence in question. I beg you to understand that I do not express any opinion as to your guilt. But I think it right to point out to you that in the event of a jury finding an adverse verdict, the bishop might be placed in great difficulty unless he were fortified with the opinion of a commission formed from your fellow clerical labourers in the diocese. Should such adverse verdict unfortunately be given, the bishop would hardly be justified in allowing a clergyman, placed as you then would be placed, to return to his cure after the expiration of such punishment as the judge might award, without a further decision from an ecclesiastical court. This decision he could obtain by proceeding against you under the act in reference to clerical offences, which empowers him as bishop of the diocese to bring you before the Court of Arches,—unless you would think well to submit yourself entirely to his judgment. You will, I think, understand what I mean. The judge at assizes might find it his duty to imprison a clergyman for a month,—regarding that clergyman simply as he would regard any other person found guilty by a jury and thus made subject to his judgment,—and might do this for an offence which the ecclesiastical judge would find himself obliged to visit with the severer sentence of prolonged suspension, or even with deprivation.

"We are, however, clearly of opinion that should the jury find themselves able to acquit you, no further action whatsoever should be taken. In such case we think that the bishop may regard your innocence to be fully established, and in such case we shall recommend his lordship to look upon the matter as altogether at

an end. I can assure you that in such case I shall so regard it myself.

"You will perceive that, as a consequence of this resolution, to which we have already come, we are not minded to make any inquiries ourselves into the circumstances of your alleged guilt, till the verdict of the jury shall be given. If you are acquitted, our course will be clear. But should you be convicted, we must in that case advise the bishop to take the proceedings to which I have alluded, or to abstain from taking them. We wish to ask you whether, now that our opinion has been conveyed to you, you will be willing to submit to the bishop's decision, in the event of an adverse verdict being given by the jury; and we think that it will be better for us all that you should meet us here at the hour I have named on Monday next, the 15th instant. It is not our intention to make any report to the bishop until the trial shall be over.

"I have the honour to be,
"My dear sir,
"Your very obedient servant,
"MORTIMER TEMPEST.

"The Rev. Josiah Crawley,
"Hogglestock."

In the same envelope Dr. Tempest sent a short private note, in which he said that he would be very happy to see Mr. Crawley at half-past one on the Monday named, that luncheon would be ready at that hour, and that, as Mr. Crawley's attendance was required on public grounds, he would take care that a carriage was provided for the day.

Mr. Crawley received this letter in his wife's pres-

ence, and read it in silence. Mrs. Crawley saw that he paid close attention to it, and was sure,—she felt that she was sure,—that it referred in some way to the terrible subject of the cheque for twenty pounds. Indeed, everything that came into the house, almost every word spoken there, and every thought that came into the breasts of any of the family, had more or less reference to the coming trial. How could it be otherwise? There was ruin coming on them all,—ruin and complete disgrace coming on father, mother, and children! To have been accused itself was very bad; but now it seemed to be the opinion of every one that the verdict must be against the man. Mrs. Crawley herself, who was perfectly sure of her husband's innocence before God, believed that the jury would find him guilty,—and believed also that he had become possessed of the money in some manner that would have been dishonest, had he not been so different from other people as to be entitled to be considered innocent where another man would have been plainly guilty. She was full of the cheque for twenty pounds, and of its results. When, therefore, he had read the letter through a second time, and even then had spoken no word about it, of course she could not refrain from questioning him. "My love," she said, "what is the letter?"

"It is on business," he answered.

She was silent for a moment before she spoke again. "May I not know the business?"

"No," said he; "not at present."

"Is it from the bishop?"

"Have I not answered you? Have I not given you to understand that, for a while at least, I would

prefer to keep the contents of this epistle to myself ?" Then he looked at her very sternly, and afterwards turned his eyes upon the fireplace and gazed at the fire, as though he were striving to read there something of his future fate. She did not much regard the severity of his speech. That, too, like the taking of the cheque itself, was to be forgiven him, because he was different from other men. His black mood had come upon him, and everything was to be forgiven him now. He was as a child when cutting his teeth. Let the poor wayward sufferer be ever so petulant, the mother simply pities and loves him, and is never angry. "I beg your pardon, Josiah," she said, "but I thought it would comfort you to speak to me about it."

"It will not comfort me," he said. "Nothing comforts me. Nothing can comfort me. Jane, give me my hat and my stick." His daughter brought to him his hat and stick, and without another word he went out and left them.

As a matter of course he turned his steps towards Hoggle End. When he desired to be long absent from the house, he always went among the brickmakers. His wife, as she stood at the window and watched the direction in which he went, knew that he might be away for hours. The only friends out of his own family with whom he ever spoke freely were some of these rough parishioners. But he was not thinking of the brickmakers when he started. He was simply desirous of again reading Dr. Tempest's letter, and of considering it, in some spot where no eye could see him. He walked away with long steps, regarding nothing,—neither the ruts in the dirty lane, nor the young primroses which were fast showing themselves

on the banks, nor the gathering clouds which might have told him of the coming rain. He went on for a couple of miles, till he had nearly reached the outskirts of the colony of Hoggle End, and then he sat himself down upon a gate. He had not been there a minute before a few slow large drops began to fall, but he was altogether too much wrapped up in his thoughts to regard the rain. What answer should he make to this letter from the man at Silverbridge?

The position of his own mind in reference to his own guilt or his own innocence was very singular. It was simply the truth that he did not know how the cheque had come to him. He did know that he had blundered about it most egregiously, especially when he had averred that this cheque for twenty pounds had been identical with a cheque for another sum which had been given to him by Mr. Soames. He had blundered since, in saying that the dean had given it to him. There could be no doubt as to this, for the dean had denied that he had done so. And he had come to think it very possible that he had indeed picked the cheque up, and had afterwards used it, having deposited it by some strange accident,—not knowing then what he was doing, or what was the nature of the bit of paper in his hand,—with the notes which he had accepted from the dean with so much reluctance, with such an agony of spirit. In all these thoughts of his own about his own doings, and his own position, he almost admitted to himself his own insanity, his inability to manage his own affairs with that degree of rational sequence which is taken for granted as belonging to a man when he is made subject to criminal laws. As he puzzled his brain in his efforts to create a mem-

ory as to the cheque, and succeeded in bringing to his mind a recollection that he had once known something about the cheque,—that the cheque had at one time been the subject of a thought and of a resolution,—he admitted to himself that, in accordance with all law and all reason, he must be regarded as a thief. He had taken and used and spent that which he ought to have known was not his own; which he would have known not to be his own but for some terrible incapacity with which God had afflicted him. What, then, must be the result? His mind was clear enough about this. If the jury could see everything and know everything,—as he would wish that they should do; and if this bishop's commission, and the bishop himself, and the Court of Arches with its judge, could see and know everything; and if, so seeing and so knowing, they could act with clear honesty and perfect wisdom,—what would they do? They would declare of him that he was not a thief, only because he was so muddy-minded, so addle-pated as not to know the difference between meum and tuum! There could be no other end to it, let all the lawyers and all the clergymen in England put their wits to it. Though he knew himself to be muddy-minded and addle-pated, he could see that. And could any one say of such a man that he was fit to be the acting clergyman of a parish,—to have a freehold possession in a parish as curer of men's souls! The bishop was in the right of it, let him be ten times as mean a fellow as he was.

And yet, as he sat there on the gate, while the rain came down heavily upon him, even when admitting the justice of the bishop, and the truth of the verdict which the jury would no doubt give, and the propriety of the

action which that cold, reasonable, prosperous man at Silverbridge would take, he pitied himself with a tenderness of commiseration which knew no bounds. As for those belonging to him, his wife and children, his pity for them was of a different kind. He would have suffered any increase of suffering, could he by such agony have released them. Dearly as he loved them, he would have severed himself from them, had it been possible. Terrible thoughts as to their fate had come into his mind in the worst moments of his moodiness, —thoughts which he had had sufficient strength and manliness to put away from him with a strong hand, lest they should drive him to crime indeed; and these had come from the great pity which he had felt for them. But the commiseration which he had felt for himself had been different from this, and had mostly visited him at times when that other pity was for the moment in abeyance. What though he had taken the cheque, and spent the money though it was not his? He might be guilty before the law, but he was not guilty before God. There had never been a thought of theft in his mind, or a desire to steal in his heart. He knew that well enough. No jury could make him guilty of theft before God. And what though this mixture of guilt and innocence had come from madness, —from madness which these courts must recognise if they chose to find him innocent of the crime? In spite of his aberrations of intellect, if there were any such, his ministrations in his parish were good. Had he not preached fervently and well,—preaching the true gospel? Had he not been very diligent among his people, striving with all his might to lessen the ignorance of the ignorant, and to gild with godliness the learning of

the instructed? Had he not been patient, enduring, instant, and in all things amenable to the laws and regulations laid down by the church for his guidance in his duties as a parish clergyman? Who could point out in what he had been astray, or where he had gone amiss? But for the work which he had done with so much zeal the church which he served had paid him so miserable a pittance that, though life and soul had been kept together, the reason, or a fragment of the reason, had at moments escaped from his keeping in the scramble. Hence it was that this terrible calamity had fallen upon him! Who had been tried as he had been tried, and had gone through such fire with less loss of intellectual power than he had done? He was still a scholar, though no brother scholar ever came near him, and would make Greek iambics as he walked along the lanes. His memory was stored with poetry, though no book ever came to his hands, except those shorn and tattered volumes which lay upon his table.

Old problems in trigonometry were the pleasing relaxations of his mind, and complications of figures were a delight to him. There was not one of those prosperous clergymen around him, and who scorned him, whom he could not have instructed in Hebrew. It was always a gratification to him to remember that his old friend the dean was weak in his Hebrew. He, with these acquirements, with these fitnesses, had been thrust down to the ground,—to the very granite,—and because in that harsh, heartless thrusting his intellect had for moments wavered as to common things, cleaving still to all its grander, nobler possessions, he was now to be rent in pieces and scattered to the winds, as being altogether vile, worthless, and worse than worth-

less. It was thus that he thought of himself, pitying himself, as he sat upon the gate, while the rain fell ruthlessly on his shoulders.

He pitied himself with a commiseration that was sickly in spite of its truth. It was the fault of the man that he was imbued too strongly with self-consciousness. He could do a great thing or two. He could keep up his courage in positions which would wash all courage out of most men. He could tell the truth though truth should ruin him. He could sacrifice all that he had to duty. He could do justice though the heavens should fall. But he could not forget to pay a tribute to himself for the greatness of his own actions; nor, when accepting with an effort of meekness the small payment made by the world to him in return for his great works, could he forget the great payments made to others for small works. It was not sufficient of him to remember that he knew Hebrew, but he must remember also that the dean did not.

Nevertheless, as he sat there under the rain, he made up his mind with a clearness that certainly had in it nothing of that muddiness of mind of which he had often accused himself. Indeed, the intellect of this man was essentially clear. It was simply his memory that would play him tricks,—his memory as to things which at the moment had not been important to him. The fact that the dean had given him money was very important, and he remembered it well. But the amount of the money, and its form, at a moment in which he had flattered himself that he might have strength to leave it unused, had not been important to him. Now, he resolved that he would go to Dr. Tempest, and that he would tell Dr. Tempest that there was no oc-

casion for any further inquiry. He would submit to the bishop, let the bishop's decision be what it might. Things were different since the day on which he had refused Mr. Thumble's admission to his pulpit. At that time people believed him to be innocent, and he so believed of himself. Now, people believed him to be guilty, and it could not be right that a man held in such slight esteem should exercise the functions of a parish priest, let his own opinion of himself be what it might. He would submit himself, and go anywhere, —to the galleys or the workhouse, if they wished it. As for his wife and children, they would, he said to himself, be better without him than with him. The world would never be so hard to a woman or to children as it had been to him.

He was sitting saturated with rain,—saturated also with thinking,—and quite unobservant of anything around him, when he was accosted by an old man from Hoggle End, with whom he was well acquainted. "Thee be wat, Master Crawley," said the old man.

"Wet!" said Crawley, recalled suddenly back to the realities of life. "Well,—yes. I am wet. That 's because it 's raining."

"Thee be teeming o' wat. Had n't thee better go whome?"

"And are not you wet also?" said Mr. Crawley, looking at the old man, who had been at work in the brickfield, and who was soaked with mire, and from whom there seemed to come a steam of muddy mist.

"Is it me, yer reverence? I 'm wat in course. The loikes of us is always wat,—that is barring the insides of us. It come to us natural to have the rheumatics. How is one of us to help hisself against having on 'em?

But there ain't no call for the loikes of you to have the rheumatics."

"My friend," said Crawley, who was now standing on the road,—and as he spoke he put out his arm and took the brickmaker by the hand, "there is a worse complaint than rheumatism,—there is, indeed."

"There 's what they calls the collerer," said Giles Hoggett, looking up into Mr. Crawley's face. "That ain't a got a hold of yer?"

"Ay, and worse than the cholera. A man is killed all over when he is struck in his pride;—and yet he lives."

"Maybe that 's bad enough too," said Giles, with his hand still held by the other.

"It is bad enough," said Mr. Crawley, striking his breast with his left hand. "It is bad enough."

"Tell 'ee what, Master Crawley;—and yer reverence must n't think as I means to be preaching; there ain't nowt a man can't bear if he 'll only be dogged. You go whome, Master Crawley, and think o' that, and may be it 'll do ye a good yet. It 's dogged as does it. It ain't thinking about it." Then Giles Hoggett withdrew his hand from the clergyman's, and walked away towards his home at Hoggle End. Mr. Crawley also turned homewards, and as he made his way through the lanes, he repeated to himself Giles Hoggett's words. "It 's dogged as does it. It 's not thinking about it."

He did not say a word to his wife on that afternoon about Dr. Tempest; and she was so much taken up with his outward condition when he returned, as almost to have forgotten the letter. He allowed himself, but barely allowed himself, to be made dry, and then for the remainder of the day applied himself to learn the lesson which Hoggett had endeavoured to teach him.

E. J. Read

But the learning of it was not easy, and hardly became more easy when he had worked the problem out in his own mind, and discovered that the brickmaker's doggedness simply meant self-abnegation;—that a man should force himself to endure anything that might be sent upon him, not only without outward grumbling, but also without grumbling inwardly.

Early on the next morning, he told his wife that he was going into Silverbridge. "It is that letter,—that letter which I got yesterday that calls me," he said. And then he handed her the letter as to which he had refused to speak to her on the preceding day.

"But this speaks of your going next Monday, Josiah," said Mrs. Crawley.

"I find it to be more suitable that I should go to-day," said he. "Some duty I do owe in this matter, both to the bishop, and to Dr. Tempest, who, after a fashion, is, as regards my present business, the bishop's representative. But I do not perceive that I owe it as a duty to either to obey implicitly their injunctions, and I will not submit myself to the cross-questionings of the man Thumble. As I am purposed at present I shall express my willingness to give up the parish."

"Give up the parish altogether?"

"Yes, altogether." As he spoke he clasped both his hands together, and having held them for a moment on high, allowed them to fall thus clasped before him. "I cannot give it up in part; I cannot abandon the duties and reserve the honorarium. Nor would I if I could."

"I did not mean that, Josiah. But pray think of it before you speak."

"I have thought of it, and I will think of it. Fare-

well, my dear." Then he came up to her and kissed her, and started on his journey on foot to Silverbridge.

It was about noon when he reached Silverbridge, and he was told that Dr. Tempest was at home. The servant asked him for a card. "I have no card," said Mr. Crawley, "but I will write my name for your behoof if your master's hospitality will allow me paper and pencil." The name was written, and as Crawley waited in the drawing-room he spent his time in hating Dr. Tempest because the door had been opened by a man-servant dressed in black. Had the man been in livery he would have hated Dr. Tempest all the same. And he would have hated him a little had the door been opened even by a smart maid.

"Your letter came to hand yesterday morning, Dr. Tempest," said Mr. Crawley, still standing, though the doctor had pointed to a chair for him after shaking hands with him; "and having given yesterday to the consideration of it, with what judgment I have been able to exercise, I have felt it to be incumbent upon me to wait upon you without further delay, as by doing so I may perhaps assist your views and save labour to those gentlemen who are joined with you in this commission of which you have spoken. To some of them it may possibly be troublesome that they should be brought together here on next Monday."

Dr. Tempest had been looking at him during this speech, and could see by his shoes and trousers that he had walked from Hogglestock to Silverbridge. "Mr. Crawley, will you not sit down?" said he, and then he rang his bell. Mr. Crawley sat down, not on the chair indicated, but on one further removed and at the other side of the table. When the servant came,—the

objectionable butler in black clothes that were so much smarter than Mr. Crawley's own,—his master's orders were communicated without any audible word, and the man returned with a decanter and wine-glasses.

"After your walk, Mr. Crawley," said Dr. Tempest, getting up from his seat to pour out the wine.

"None, I thank you."

"Pray let me persuade you. I know the length of the miles so well."

"I will take none, if you please, sir," said Mr. Crawley.

"Now, Mr. Crawley," said Dr. Tempest, "do let me speak to you as a friend. You have walked eight miles, and are going to talk to me on a subject which is of vital importance to yourself. I won't discuss it unless you 'll take a glass of wine and a biscuit."

"Dr. Tempest!"

"I 'm quite in earnest. I won't. If you do as I ask you, you shall talk to me till dinner-time, if you like it. There. Now you may begin."

Mr. Crawley did eat the biscuit and did drink the wine, and as he did so, he acknowledged to himself that Dr. Tempest was right. He felt that the wine made him stronger to speak. "I hardly know why you have preferred to-day to next Monday," said Dr. Tempest; "but if anything can be done by your presence here to-day, your time shall not be thrown away."

"I have preferred to-day to Monday," said Crawley, "partly because I would sooner talk to one man than to five."

"There is something in that, certainly," said Dr. Tempest.

"And as I have made up my mind as to the course

of action which it is my duty to take in the matter to which your letter of the 9th of this month refers, there can be no reason why I should postpone the declaration of my purpose. Dr. Tempest, I have determined to resign my preferment at Hogglestock, and shall write to-day to the Dean of Barchester, who is the patron, acquainting him of my purpose."

"You mean in the event—in the event——"

"I mean, sir, to do this without reference to any event that is future. The bishop, Dr. Tempest, when I shall have been proved to be a thief, shall have no trouble either in causing my suspension or my deprivation. The name and fame of a parish clergyman should be unstained. Mine have become foul with infamy. I will not wait to be deprived by any court, by any bishop, or by any commission. I will bow my head to that public opinion which has reached me, and I will deprive myself."

He had got up from his chair, and was standing as he pronounced the final sentence against himself. Dr. Tempest still remained seated in his chair, looking at him, and for a few moments there was silence. "You must not do that, Mr. Crawley," Dr. Tempest said at last.

"But I shall do it."

"Then the dean must not take your resignation. Speaking to you frankly, I tell you that there is no prevailing opinion as to the verdict which the jury may give."

"My decision has nothing to do with the jury's verdict. My decision——"

"Stop a moment, Mr. Crawley. It is possible that you might say that which should not be said."

"There is nothing to be said,—nothing which I could

say, which I would not say at the town cross if it were possible. As to this money, I do not know whether I stole it or whether I did not."

"That is just what I have thought."

"It is so."

"Then you did not steal it. There can be no doubt about that."

"Thank you, Dr. Tempest. I thank you heartily for saying so much. But, sir, you are not the jury. Nor, if you were, could you whitewash me from the infamy which has been cast on me. Against the opinion expressed at the beginning of these proceedings by the bishop of the diocese,—or rather against that expressed by his wife,—I did venture to make a stand. Neither the opinion which came from the palace, nor the vehicle by which it was expressed, commanded my respect. Since that, others have spoken to whom I feel myself bound to yield;—yourself not the least among them, Dr. Tempest;—and to them I shall yield. You may tell the Bishop of Barchester that I shall at once resign the perpetual curacy of Hogglestock into the hands of the Dean of Barchester, by whom I was appointed."

"No, Mr. Crawley; I shall not do that. I cannot control you, but thinking you to be wrong, I shall not make that communication to the bishop."

"Then I shall do so myself."

"And your wife, Mr. Crawley, and your children?"

At that moment Mr. Crawley called to mind the advice of his friend Giles Hoggett: "It 's dogged as does it." He certainly wanted something very strong to sustain him in his difficulty. He found that this reference to his wife and children required him to be

dogged in a very marked manner. "I can only trust that the wind may be tempered to them," he said. "They will, indeed, be shorn lambs."

Dr. Tempest got up from his chair, and took a couple of turns about the room before he spoke again. "Man," he said, addressing Mr. Crawley with all his energy, "if you do this thing, you will then at least be very wicked. If the jury find a verdict in your favour you are safe, and the chances are that the verdict will be in your favour."

"I care nothing now for the verdict," said Mr. Crawley.

"And you will turn your wife into the poorhouse for an idea!"

"It 's dogged as does it," said Mr. Crawley to himself. "I have thought of that," he said aloud. "That my wife is dear to me, and that my children are dear, I will not deny. She was softly nurtured, Dr. Tempest, and came from a house in which want was never known. Since she has shared my board she has had some experience of that nature. That I should have brought her to all this is very terrible to me,—so terrible that I often wonder how it is that I live. But, sir, you will agree with me, that my duty as a clergyman is above everything. I do not dare, even for their sake, to remain in the parish. Good-morning, Dr. Tempest." Dr. Tempest, finding that he could not prevail with him, bade him adieu, feeling that any service to the Crawleys within his power might be best done by intercession with the bishop and with the dean.

Then Mr. Crawley walked back to Hogglestock, repeating to himself Giles Hoggett's words, "It 's dogged as does it."

CHAPTER VII.

MR. CRAWLEY'S LETTER TO THE DEAN.

Mr. Crawley, when he got home after his walk to Silverbridge, denied that he was at all tired. "The man at Silverbridge whom I went to see administered refreshment to me;—nay, he administered it with salutary violence," he said, affecting even to laugh. "And I am bound to speak well of him on behalf of mercies over and beyond that exhibited by the persistent tender of some wine. That I should find him judicious I had expected. What little I have known of him taught me so to think of him. But I found with him also a softness of heart for which I had not looked."

"And you will not give up the living, Josiah?"

"Most certainly I will. A duty, when it is clear before a man, should never be made less so by any tenderness in others." He was still thinking of Giles Hoggett. "It 's dogged as does it." The poor woman could not answer him. She knew well that it was vain to argue with him. She could only hope that, in the event of his being acquitted at the trial, the dean, whose friendship she did not doubt, might re-endow him with the small benefice which was their only source of bread.

On the following morning there came by post a short note from Dr. Tempest.

"My dear Mr. Crawley," (the note ran),—"I implore you, if there be yet time, to do nothing rashly. And even although you should have written to the bishop or to the dean, your letters need have no effect, if you will allow me to make them inoperative. Permit me to say that I am a man much older than you, and one who has mixed much both with clergymen and with the world at large. I tell you with absolute confidence, that it is not your duty in your present position to give up your living. Should your conduct ever be called in question on this matter you will be at perfect liberty to say that you were guided by my advice. You should take no step till after the trial. Then, if the verdict be against you, you should submit to the bishop's judgment. If the verdict be in your favour, the bishop's interference will be over.

"And you must remember that if it is not your duty as a clergyman to give up your living, you can have no right, seeing that you have a wife and family, to throw it away as an indulgence to your pride. Consult any other friend you please;—Mr. Robarts, or the dean himself. I am quite sure that any friend who knows as many of the circumstances as I know will advise you to hold the living, at any rate till after the trial. You can refer any such friend to me.

"Believe me to be, yours very truly,

"MORTIMER TEMPEST."

Mr. Crawley walked about again with this letter in his pocket, but on this occasion he did not go in the direction of Hoggle End. From Hoggle End he could hardly hope to pick up further lessons of wisdom. What could any Giles Hoggett say to him beyond what

he had said to him already? If he were to read the doctor's letter to Hoggett, and to succeed in making Hoggett understand it all, Hoggett could only caution him to be dogged. But it seemed to him that Hoggett and his new friend at Silverbridge did not agree in their doctrines, and it might be well that he should endeavour to find out which of them had most of justice on his side. He was quite sure that Hoggett would advise him to adhere to his project of giving up the living,—if only Hoggett could be made to understand the circumstances.

He had written, but had not as yet sent away his letter to the dean. His letter to the bishop would be but a note, and he had postponed the writing of that till the other should be copied and made complete.

He had sat up late into the night composing and altering his letter to his old friend, and now that the composition was finished he was loth to throw it away. Early in this morning, before the postman had brought to him Dr. Tempest's urgent remonstrance, he had shown to his wife the draft of his letter to the dean. "I cannot say that it is not true," she had said.

"It is certainly true."

"But I wish, dear, you would not send it. Why should you take any step till the trial be over?"

"I shall assuredly send it," he had replied. "If you will peruse it again, you will see that the epistle would be futile were it kept till I shall have been proved to be a thief."

"Oh, Josiah, such words kill me."

"They are not pleasant, but it will be well that you should become used to them. As for the letter, I have taken some trouble to express myself with perspicuity,

and I trust that I may have succeeded." At that time Hoggett was altogether in the ascendant; but now, as he started on his walk, his mind was somewhat perturbed by the contrary advice of one who, after all, might be as wise as Hoggett. There would be nothing dogged in the conduct recommended to him by Dr. Tempest. Were he to follow the doctor's advice, he would be trimming his sails, so as to catch any slant of a breeze that might be favourable to him. There could be no doggedness in a character that would submit to such trimming.

The postman came to Hogglestock but once in a day, so that he could not despatch his letter till the next morning,—unless, indeed, he chose to send it a distance of four miles to the nearest post-office. As there was nothing to justify this, there was another night for the copying of his letter,—should he at last determine to send it. He had declared to Dr. Tempest that he would send it. He had sworn to his wife that it should go. He had taken much trouble with it. He believed in Hoggett. But, nevertheless, this incumbency of Hogglestock was his all in the world. It might be that he could still hold it, and have bread at least for his wife to eat. Dr. Tempest had told him that he would be probably acquitted. Dr. Tempest knew as much of all the circumstances as he did himself, and had told him that he was not guilty. After all, Dr. Tempest knew more about it than Hoggett knew.

If he resigned the living, what would become of him,—of him,—of him and of his wife? Whither would they first go when they turned their back upon the door inside which there had at any rate been shelter for them for many years? He calculated every-

thing that he had, and found that at the end of April, even when he should have received his rent-charge, there would not be five pounds in hand among them. As for his furniture, he still owed enough to make it impossible that he should get anything out of that. And these thoughts all had reference to his position if he should be acquitted. What would become of his wife if he should be convicted? And as for himself, whither should he go when he came out of prison?

He had completely realised the idea that Hoggett's counsel was opposed to that given to him by Dr. Tempest; but then it might certainly be the case that Hoggett had not known all the facts. A man should, no doubt, be dogged when the evils of life are insuperable; but need he be so when the evils can be overcome? Would not Hoggett himself undergo any treatment which he believed to be specific for rheumatism? Yes; Hoggett would undergo any treatment that was not in itself opposed to his duty. The best treatment for rheumatism might be to stay away from the brickfield on a rainy day; but if so, there would be no money to keep the pot boiling, and Hoggett would certainly go to the brickfield, rheumatism and all, as long as his limbs would carry him there. Yes; he would send his letter. It was his duty, and he would do it. Men looked askance at him, and pointed at him as a thief. He would send the letter, in spite of Dr. Tempest. Let justice be done, though the heaven may fall.

He had heard of Lady Lufton's offer to his wife. The offers of the Lady Luftons of the world had been sorely distressing to his spirit, since it had first come to pass that such offers had reached him in consequence

of his poverty. But now there was something almost of relief to him in the thought that the Lady Luftons would, after some fashion, save his wife and children from starvation;—would save his wife from the poor-house, and enable his children to have a start in the world. For one of his children a brilliant marriage might be provided,—if only he himself were out of the way. How could he take himself out of the way? It had been whispered to him that he might be imprisoned for two months,—or for two years. Would it not be a grand thing if the judge would condemn him to be imprisoned for life? Was there ever a man whose existence was so purposeless, so useless, so deleterious, as his own? And yet he knew Hebrew well, whereas the dean knew but very little Hebrew. He could make Greek iambics, and doubted whether the bishop knew the difference between an iambus and a trochee. He could disport himself with trigonometry, feeling confident that Dr. Tempest had forgotten his way over the asses' bridge. He knew Lycidas by heart; and as for Thumble, he felt quite sure that Thumble was incompetent of understanding a single allusion in that divine poem. Nevertheless, though all this wealth of acquirement was his, it would be better for himself, better for those who belonged to him, better for the world at large, that he should be put an end to. A sentence of penal servitude for life, without any trial, would be of all things the most desirable. Then there would be ample room for the practice of that virtue which Hoggett had taught him.

When he returned home the Hoggettian doctrine prevailed, and he prepared to copy his letter. But before he commenced his task, he sat down with his

youngest daughter, and read,—or made her read to him,—a passage out of a Greek poem, in which are described the troubles and agonies of a blind giant. No giant would have been more powerful,—only that he was blind, and could not see to avenge himself on those who had injured him. "The same story is always coming up," he said, stopping the girl in her reading. "We have it in various versions, because it is so true to life.

> "'Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
> Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves.'

It is the same story. Great power reduced to impotence, great glory to misery, by the hand of Fate,—Necessity, as the Greeks called her; the goddess that will not be shunned! 'At the mill with slaves!' People, when they read it, do not appreciate the horror of the picture. Go on, my dear. It may be a question whether Polyphemus had mind enough to suffer; but, from the description of his power, I should think that he had. 'At the mill with slaves!' Can any picture be more dreadful than that? Go on, my dear. Of course you remember Milton's 'Samson Agonistes.' Agonistes indeed!" His wife was sitting stitching at the other side of the room; but she heard his words,—heard and understood them; and before Jane could again get herself into the swing of the Greek verse, she was over at her husband's side, with her arms round his neck. "My love!" she said. "My love!"

He turned to her, and smiled as he spoke to her. "These are old thoughts with me. Polyphemus and Belisarius, and Samson, and Milton, have always been pets of mine. The mind of the strong blind creature

must be so sensible of the injury that has been done to him! The impotency, combined with his strength, or rather the impotency with the memory of former strength and former aspirations, is so essentially tragic!"

She looked into his eyes as he spoke, and there was something of the flash of old days, when the world was young to them, and when he would tell her of his hopes, and repeat to her long passages of poetry, and would criticise for her advantage the works of old writers. "Thank God," she said, "that you are not blind. It may yet be all right with you."

"Yes,—it may be," he said.

"And you shall not be at the mill with slaves."

"Or, at any rate, not eyeless in Gaza, if the Lord is good to me. Come, Jane, we will go on." Then he took up the passage himself, and read it on with clear, sonorous voice, every now and then explaining some passage or expressing his own ideas upon it, as though he were really happy with his poetry.

It was late in the evening before he got out his small stock of best letter-paper, and sat down to work at his letter. He first addressed himself to the bishop; and what he wrote to the bishop was as follows:—

"Hogglestock Parsonage, April 11, 186—.

"My Lord Bishop,—I have been in communication with Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge, from whom I have learned that your lordship has been pleased to appoint a commission of inquiry,—of which commission he is the chairman,—with reference to the proceedings which it may be necessary that you should take, as bishop of this diocese, after my forthcoming trial at the approaching Barsetshire assizes. My lord, I think it

right to inform you, partly with a view to the comfort of the gentlemen named on that commission, and partly with the purport of giving you that information which I think that a bishop should possess in regard to the clerical affairs of his own diocese, that I have by this post resigned my preferment at Hogglestock into the hands of the Dean of Barchester, by whom it was given to me. In these circumstances, it will, I suppose, be unnecessary for you to continue the commission which you have set in force; but as to that, your lordship will of course be the only judge.

"I have the honour to be, my lord bishop,

"Your most obedient and very humble servant,

"Josiah Crawley,

"Perpetual Curate of Hogglestock.

"The Right Reverend

"The Bishop of Barchester,

"&c. &c. &c.

"The Palace, Barchester."

But the letter which was of real importance,—which was intended to say something,—was that to the dean, and that also shall be given to the reader. Mr. Crawley had been for a while in doubt how he should address his old friend in commencing this letter, understanding that its tone throughout must, in a great degree, be made conformable with its first words. He would fain, in his pride, have begun "Sir." The question was between that and "My dear Arabin." It had once between them always been "Dear Frank" and "Dear Joe;" but the occasions for "Dear Frank" and "Dear Joe" between them had long been past. Crawley would have been very angry had he now been

called Joe by the dean, and would have bitten his tongue out before he would have called the dean Frank. His better nature, however, now prevailed, and he began his letter and completed it, as follows:—

"My dear Arabin,—Circumstances, of which you have probably heard something, compel me to write to you, as I fear, at some length. I am sorry that the trouble of such a letter should be forced upon you during your holidays;"—Mr. Crawley, as he wrote this, did not forget to remind himself that he never had any holidays;—"but I think you will admit, if you will bear with me to the end, that I have no alternative.

"I have been accused of stealing a cheque for twenty pounds, which cheque was drawn by my Lord Lufton on his London bankers, and was lost out of his pocket by Mr. Soames, his lordship's agent, and was so lost, as Mr. Soames states,—not with an absolute assertion,—during a visit which he made to my parsonage here at Hogglestock. Of the fact that I paid the cheque to a tradesman in Silverbridge there is no doubt. When questioned about it, I first gave an answer which was so manifestly incorrect that it has seemed odd to me that I should not have had credit for a mistake from those who must have seen that detection was so evident. The blunder was undoubtedly stupid, and it now bears heavy on me. I then, as I have learned, made another error,—of which I am aware that you have been informed. I said that the cheque had come to me from you, and in saying so, I thought that it had formed a portion of that alms which your open-handed benevolence bestowed upon me when I attended on you, not long before your departure, in your library.

I have striven to remember the facts. It may be,—nay, it probably is the case,—that such struggles to catch some accurate glimpse of bygone things do not trouble you. Your mind is, no doubt, clearer and stronger than mine, having been kept to its proper tone by greater and fitter work. With me, memory is all but gone, and the power of thinking is on the wane! I struggled to remember, and I thought that the cheque had been in the envelope which you handed to me,—and I said so. I have since learned, from tidings received, as I am told, direct from yourself, that I was as wrong in the second statement as I had been in the first. The double blunder has, of course, been very heavy on me.

"I was taken before the magistrates at Silverbridge, and was by them committed to stand my trial at the assizes to be holden in Barchester on the 28th of this month. Without doubt, the magistrates had no alternative but to commit me, and I am indebted to them that they have allowed me my present liberty upon bail. That my sufferings in all this should have been grievous, you will understand. But on that head I should not touch, were it not that I am bound to explain to you that my troubles in reference to this parish of Hogglestock, to which I was appointed by you, have not been the slightest of those sufferings. I felt at first, believing then that the world around me would think it unlikely that such a one as I had wilfully stolen a sum of money, that it was my duty to maintain myself in my church. I did so maintain myself against an attack made upon me by the bishop, who sent over to Hogglestock one Mr. Thumble, a gentleman doubtless in holy orders, though I know nothing and can

learn nothing of the place of his cure, to dispossess me of my pulpit, and to remove me from my ministrations among my people. To Mr. Thumble I turned a deaf ear, and would not let him so much as open his mouth inside the porch of my church. Up to this time I myself have read the services, and have preached to the people, and have continued, as best I could, my visits to the poor and my labours in the school, though I know,—no one knows as well,—how unfitted I am for such work by the grief which has fallen upon me.

"Then the bishop sent for me, and I thought it becoming on my part to go to him. I presented myself to his lordship at his palace, and was minded to be much governed in my conduct by what he might say to me, remembering that I am bound to respect the office, even though I may not approve the man; and I humbled myself before his lordship, waiting patiently for any directions which he in his discretion might think it proper to bestow on me. But there arose up between us that very pestilent woman, his wife,—to his dismay, seemingly, as much as to mine,—and she would let there be place for no speech but her own. If there be aught clear to me in ecclesiastical matters, it is this,—that no authority can be delegated to a female. The special laws of this and of some other countries do allow that women shall sit upon the temporal thrones of the earth, but on the lowest step of the throne of the church no woman has been allowed to sit as bearing authority, the romantic tale of the woman Pope notwithstanding. Thereupon, I left the palace in wrath, feeling myself aggrieved that a woman should have attempted to dictate to me, and finding it hopeless to get a clear instruction from his lordship,—

the woman taking up the word whenever I put a question to my lord the bishop. Nothing, therefore, came of that interview but fruitless labour to myself, and anger, of which I have since been ashamed.

"Since that time I have continued in my parish,—working, not without zeal, though in truth, almost without hope,—and learning ever from day to day that the opinions of men around me have declared me to be guilty of the crime imputed to me. And now the bishop has issued a commission as preparatory to proceeding against me under the act for the punishment of clerical offences. In doing this, I cannot say that the bishop has been ill-advised, even though the advice may have come from that evil-tongued lady, his wife. And I hold that a woman may be called on for advice, with most salutary effect, in affairs as to which any show of female authority would be equally false and pernicious. With me it has ever been so, and I have had a counsellor by me as wise as she has been devoted." It must be noticed that in the draft copy of his letter which Mr. Crawley gave to his wife to read this last sentence was not inserted. Intending that she should read his letter, he omitted it till he made the fair copy. "Over this commission his lordship has appointed Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge to preside, and with him I have been in communication. I trust that the labours of the gentlemen of whom it is composed may be brought to a speedy close; and, having regard to their trouble, which in such a matter is, I fear, left without remuneration, I have informed Dr. Tempest that I should write this letter to you with the intent and assured purpose of resigning the perpetual curacy of Hogglestock into your hands.

"You will be good enough, therefore, to understand that I do so resign the living, and that I shall continue to administer the services of the church only till some clergyman, certified to me as coming from you or from the bishop, may present himself in the parish, and shall declare himself prepared to undertake the cure. Should it be so that Mr. Thumble be sent hither again, I will sit under him, endeavouring to catch improvement from his teaching, and striving to overcome the contempt which I felt for him when he before visited this parish. I annex beneath my signature a copy of the letter which I have written to the bishop on the subject.

"And now it behoves me, as the guardianship of the souls of those around me was placed in my hands by you, to explain to you as shortly as may be possible the reasons which have induced me to abandon my work. One or two whose judgment I do not discredit, —and I am allowed to name Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge as one,—have suggested to me that I should take no step myself till after my trial. They think that I should have regard to the chance of the verdict, so that the preferment may still be mine should I be acquitted; and they say, that should I be acquitted, the bishop's action against me must of necessity cease. That they are right in these facts I do not doubt; but in giving such advice they look only to facts, having no regard to the conscience. I do not blame them. I should give such advice myself, knowing that a friend may give counsel as to outer things, but that a man must satisfy his inner conscience by his own perceptions of what is right and what is wrong.

"I find myself to be ill-spoken of, to be regarded

with hard eyes by those around me, my people thinking that I have stolen this money. Two farmers in this parish have, as I am aware, expressed opinions that no jury could acquit me honestly, and neither of these men have appeared in my church since the expression of that opinion. I doubt whether they have gone to other churches; and if not they have been deterred from all public worship by my presence. If this be so, how can I with a clear conscience remain among these men? Shall I take from their hands wages for those administrations, which their deliberately formed opinions will not allow them to accept from my hands?" And yet, though he thus pleaded against himself, he knew that the two men of whom he was speaking were thick-headed dolts who were always tipsy on Saturday nights, and who came to church perhaps once in three weeks.

"Your kind heart will doubtless prompt you to tell me that no clergyman could be safe in his parish if he were to allow the opinion of chance parishioners to prevail against him; and you would probably lay down for my guidance that grand old doctrine, 'Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.' Presuming that you may do so, I will acknowledge such guidance to be good. If my mind were clear in this matter, I would not budge an inch for any farmer,—no, nor for any bishop, further than he might by law compel me! But my mind is not clear. I do grow pale, and my hair stands on end with horror, as I confess to myself that I do not know whether I stole this money or no! Such is the fact. In all sincerity I tell you that I know not whether I be guilty or innocent. It may be that I picked up the cheque from the floor of my room, and afterwards took

it out and used it, not knowing whence it had come to me. If it be so, I stole it, and am guilty before the laws of my country. If it be so, I am not fit to administer the Lord's sacraments to these people. When the cup was last in my hand and I was blessing them, I felt that I was not fit, and I almost dropped the chalice. That God will know my weakness and pardon me the perplexity of my mind,—that is between Him and His creature.

"As I read my letter over to myself I feel how weak are my words, and how inefficient to explain to you the exact position in which I stand; but they will suffice to convince you that I am assuredly purposed to resign this parish of Hogglestock, and that it is therefore incumbent on you, as patron of the living, to nominate my successor to the benefice. I have only further to ask your pardon for this long letter, and to thank you again for the many and great marks of friendship which you have conferred on me. Alas, could you have foreseen in those old days how barren of all good would have been the life of him you then esteemed, you might perhaps have escaped the disgrace of being called the friend of one whom no one now regards with esteem.

"Nevertheless, I may still say that I am,

"With all affection, yours truly,

"Josiah Crawley."

The last paragraph of the letter was also added since his wife had read it. When he had first composed his letter, he had been somewhat proud of his words, thinking that he had clearly told his story. But when, sitting alone at his desk, he read it again, filling his mind

as he went on with ideas which he would fain have expressed to his old friend, were it not that he feared to indulge himself with too many words, he began to tell himself that his story was anything but well told. There was no expression there of the Hoggettian doctrine. In answer to such a letter as that the dean might well say, "Think again of it. Try yet to save yourself. Never mind the two farmers, or Mr. Thumble, or the bishop. Stick to the ship while there is a plank above the water." Whereas it had been his desire to use words that should make the dean clearly understand that the thing was decided. He had failed,—as he had failed in everything throughout his life; but nevertheless the letter must go. Were he to begin again he would not do it better. So he added to what he had written a copy of his note to the bishop, and the letter was fastened and sent.

Mrs. Crawley might probably have been more instant in her efforts to stop the letter, had she not felt that it would not decide everything. In the first place it was not improbable that the letter might not reach the dean till after his return home,—and Mrs. Crawley had long since made up her mind that she would see the dean as soon as possible after his return. She had heard from Lady Lufton that it was not doubted in Barchester that he would be back at any rate before the judges came into the City. And then, in the next place, was it probable that the dean would act upon such a letter by filling up the vacancy, even if he did get it? She trusted in the dean, and knew that he would help them, if any help were possible. Should the verdict go against her husband, then indeed it might be that no help would be possible. In such

case she thought that the bishop with his commission might prevail. But she still believed that the verdict would be favourable,—if not with an assured belief, still with a hope that was sufficient to stand in lieu of a belief. No single man, let alone no twelve men, could think that her husband had intended to appropriate that money dishonestly. That he had taken it improperly,—without real possession,—she herself believed; but he had not taken it as a thief, and could not merit a thief's punishment.

After two days he got a reply from the bishop's chaplain, in which the chaplain expressed the bishop's commendation of Mr. Crawley's present conduct. "Mr. Thumble shall proceed from hence to Hogglestock on next Sunday," said the chaplain, "and shall relieve you for the present from the burden of your duties. As to the future status of the parish, it will perhaps be best that nothing shall be done till the dean returns,—or perhaps till the assizes shall be over. This is the bishop's opinion." It need hardly be explained that the promised visit of Mr. Thumble to Hogglestock was gall and wormwood to Mr. Crawley. He had told the dean that should Mr. Thumble come, he would endeavour to learn something even from him. But it may be doubted whether Mr. Crawley in his present mood could learn anything useful from Mr. Thumble. Giles Hoggett was a much more effective teacher.

"I will endure even that," he said to his wife, as she handed to him back the letter from the bishop's chaplain.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO VISITORS TO HOGGLESTOCK.

THE cross-grainedness of men is so great that things will often be forced to go wrong, even when they have the strongest possible natural tendency of their own to go right. It was so now in these affairs between the archdeacon and his son. The original difficulty was solved by the good feeling of the young lady,—by that and by the real kindness of the archdeacon's nature. They had come to terms which were satisfactory to both of them, and those terms admitted of perfect reconciliation between the father and his son. Whether the major did marry the lady or whether he did not, his allowance was to be continued to him, the archdeacon being perfectly willing to trust himself in the matter to the pledge which he had received from Miss Crawley. All that he required from his son was simply this,—that he should pull down the bills advertising the sale of his effects. Was any desire ever more rational? The sale had been advertised for a day just one week in advance of the assizes, and the time must have been selected,—so thought the archdeacon,—with a malicious intention. Why, at any rate, should the things be sold before any one knew whether the father of the young lady was or was not to be regarded as a thief? And why should the things be sold at all, when the

archdeacon had tacitly withdrawn his threats,—when he had given his son to understand that the allowance would still be paid quarterly with the customary archidiaconal regularity, and that no alteration was intended in those settlements under which the Plumstead foxes would, in the ripeness of time, become the property of the major himself. It was thus that the archdeacon looked at it, and as he did so, he thought that his son was the most cross-grained of men.

But the major had his own way of looking at the matter. He had, he flattered himself, dealt very fairly with his father. When he had first made up his mind to make Miss Crawley his wife, he had told his father of his intention. The archdeacon had declared that, if he did so, such and such results would follow,—results which, as was apparent to every one, would make it indispensable that the major should leave Cosby Lodge. The major had never complained. So he told himself. He had simply said to his father,—"I shall do as I have said. You can do as you have said. Therefore I shall prepare to leave Cosby Lodge." He had so prepared; and as a part of that preparation, the auctioneer's bills had been stuck up on the posts and walls. Then the archdeacon had gone to work surreptitiously with the lady,—the reader will understand that we are still following the workings of the major's mind,—and having succeeded in obtaining a pledge which he had been wrong to demand, came forward very graciously to withdraw his threats. He withdrew his threats because he had succeeded in his object by other means. The major knew nothing of the kiss that had been given, of the two tears that had trickled down his father's nose, of the generous epithets which

the archdeacon had applied to Grace. He did not guess how nearly his father had yielded altogether beneath the pressure of Grace's charms,—how willing he was to yield altogether at the first decent opportunity. His father had obtained a pledge from Grace that she would not marry in certain circumstances,—as to which circumstances the major was strongly resolved that they should form no bar to his marriage,—and then came forward with his eager demand that the sale should be stopped! The major could not submit to so much indignity. He had resolved that his father should have nothing to do with his marriage one way or the other. He would not accept anything from his father on the understanding that his father had any such right. His father had asserted such right with threats, and he, the major, taking such threats as meaning something, had seen that he must leave Cosby Lodge. Let his father come forward, and say that they meant nothing, that he abandoned all right to any interference as to his son's marriage, and then the son —would dutifully consent to accept his father's bounty! They were both cross-grained, as Mrs. Grantly declared; but I think that the major was the most cross-grained of the two.

Something of the truth made its way into Henry Grantly's mind as he drove himself home from Barchester after seeing his grandfather. It was not that he began to think that his father was right, but that he almost perceived that it might be becoming in him to forgive some fault in his father. He had been implored to honour his father, and he was willing to do so, understanding that such honour must, to a certain degree, imply obedience,—if it could be done at no

more than a moderate expense to his feelings. The threatened auctioneer was the cause of offence to his father, and he might see whether it would not be possible to have the sale postponed. There would, of course, be a pecuniary loss, and that in his diminished circumstances,—he would still talk to himself of his diminished circumstances,—might be inconvenient. But so much he thought himself bound to endure on his father's behalf. At any rate, he would consult the auctioneer at Silverbridge.

But he would not make any pause in the measures which he had proposed to himself as likely to be conducive to his marriage. As for Grace's pledge, such pledges from young ladies never went for anything. It was out of the question that she should be sacrificed, even though her father had taken the money. And, moreover, the very gist of the major's generosity was to consist in his marrying her whether the father were guilty or innocent. He understood that perfectly, and understood also that it was his duty to make his purpose in this respect known to Grace's family. He determined, therefore, that he would go over to Hogglestock, and see Mr. Crawley before he saw the auctioneer.

Hitherto Major Grantly had never even spoken to Mr. Crawley. It may be remembered that the major was at the present moment one of the bailmen for the due appearance of Mr. Crawley before the judge, and that he had been present when the magistrates sat at the inn in Silverbridge. He therefore knew the man's presence, but except on that occasion he had never even seen his intended future father-in-law. From the moment when he had first allowed himself to think of Grace,

he had desired, yet almost feared, to make acquaintance with the father; but had been debarred from doing so by the peculiar position in which Mr. Crawley was placed. He had felt that it would be impossible to speak to the father of his affection for the daughter without any allusion to the coming trial; but he did not know how such allusion could be made. Thinking of this, he had at different times almost resolved not to call at Hogglestock till the trial should be over. Then he would go there, let the result of the trial have been what it might. But it had now become necessary for him to go on at once. His father had precipitated matters by his appeal to Grace. He would appeal to Grace's father, and reach Grace through his influence.

He drove over to Hogglestock, feeling himself to be anything but comfortable as he came near to the house. And when he did reach the spot he was somewhat disconcerted to find that another visitor was in the house before him. He presumed this to be the case, because there stood a little pony horse,—an animal which did not strongly recommend itself to his instructed eye,—attached by its rein to the palings. It was a poor humble-looking beast, whose knees had very lately become acquainted with the hard and sharp stones of a newly mended highway. The blood was even now red upon the wounds.

"He 'll never be much good again," said the major to his servant.

"That he won't, sir," said the man. "But I don't think he 's been very much good for some time back."

"I should n't like to have to ride him into Silverbridge," said the major, descending from the gig, and instructing his servant to move the horse and gig about

as long as he might remain within the house. Then he walked across the little garden and knocked at the door. The door was immediately opened, and in the passage he found Mr. Crawley, and another clergyman whom the reader will recognise as Mr. Thumble. Mr. Thumble had come over to make arrangements as to the Sunday services and the parochial work, and had been very urgent in impressing on Mr. Crawley that the duties were to be left entirely to himself. Hence had come some bitter words, in which Mr. Crawley, though no doubt he said the sharper things of the two, had not been able to vanquish his enemy so completely as he had done on former occasions.

"There must be no interference, my dear sir,—none whatever, if you please," Mr. Thumble had said.

"There shall be none of which the bishop shall have reason to complain," Mr. Crawley had replied.

"There must be none at all, Mr. Crawley, if you please. It is only on that understanding that I have consented to take the parish temporarily into my hands. Mrs. Crawley, I hope that there may be no mistake about the schools. It must be exactly as though I were residing on the spot."

"Sir," said Mr. Crawley, very irate at this appeal to his wife, and speaking in a loud voice, "do you misdoubt my word; or do you think that if I were minded to be false to you, that I should be corrected in my falsehood by the firmer faith of my wife?"

"I meant nothing about falsehood, Mr. Crawley."

"Having resigned this benefice for certain reasons of my own, with which I shall not trouble you, and acknowledging as I do,—and have done in writing under my hand to the bishop,—the propriety of his

lordship's interference in providing for the services of the parish till my successor shall have been instituted, I shall, with what feelings of regret I need not say, leave you to the performance of your temporary duties."

"That is all that I require, Mr. Crawley."

"But it is wholly unnecessary that you should instruct me in mine."

"The bishop especially desires——" began Mr. Thumble. But Mr. Crawley interrupted him instantly.

"If the bishop has directed you to give me such instruction, the bishop has been much in error. I will submit to receive none from him through you, sir. If you please, sir, let there be an end of it;" and Mr. Crawley waved his hand. I hope that the reader will conceive the tone of Mr. Crawley's voice, and will appreciate the aspect of his face, and will see the motion of his hand, as he spoke these latter words. Mr. Thumble felt the power of the man so sensibly that he was unable to carry on the contest. Though Mr. Crawley was now but a broken reed, and was beneath his feet, yet Mr. Thumble acknowledged to himself that he could not hold his own in debate with the broken reed. But the words had been spoken, and the tone of the voice had died away, and the fire in the eyes had burned itself out before the moment of the major's arrival. Mr. Thumble was now returning to his horse, and having enjoyed,—if he did enjoy,—his little triumph about the parish, was becoming unhappy at the future dangers that awaited him. Perhaps he was the more unhappy because it had been proposed to him by authorities at the palace that he should repeatedly ride on the same animal from Barchester to Hogglestock and back. Mr. Crawley was in the act

of replying to lamentations on this subject, with his hand on the latch, when the major arrived—"I regret to say, sir, that I cannot assist you by supplying any other steed." Then the major had knocked, and Mr. Crawley had at once opened the door.

"You probably do not remember me, Mr. Crawley?" said the major. "I am Major Grantly." Mrs. Crawley, who heard these words inside the room, sprang up from her chair, and could hardly resist the temptation to rush into the passage. She too had barely seen Major Grantly; and now the only bright gleam which appeared on her horizon depended on his constancy under circumstances which would have justified his inconstancy. But had he meant to be inconstant, surely he would never have come to Hogglestock!

"I remember you well, sir," said Mr. Crawley. "I am under no common obligation to you. You are at present one of my bailmen."

"There 's nothing in that," said the major.

Mr. Thumble, who had caught the name of Grantly, took off his hat, which he had put on his head. He had not been particular in keeping off his hat before Mr. Crawley. But he knew very well that Archdeacon Grantly was a big man in the diocese; and though the Grantlys and the Proudies were opposed to each other, still it might be well to take off his hat before any one who had to do with the big ones of the diocese. "I hope your respected father is well, sir?" said Mr. Thumble.

"Pretty well, I thank you." The major stood close up against the wall of the passage, so as to allow room for Mr. Thumble to pass out. His business was one on which he could hardly begin to speak until the other

visitor should have gone. Mr. Crawley was standing with the door wide open in his hand. He also was anxious to be rid of Mr. Thumble,—and was perhaps not so solicitous as a brother clergyman should have been touching the future fate of Mr. Thumble in the matter of the bishop's old cob.

"Really, I don't know what to do as to getting upon him again," said Mr. Thumble.

"If you will allow him to progress slowly," said Mr. Crawley, "he will probably travel with the greater safety."

"I don't know what you call slow, Mr. Crawley. I was ever so much over two hours coming here from Barchester. He stumbled almost at every step."

"Did he fall while you were on him?" asked the major.

"Indeed he did, sir. You never saw such a thing, Major Grantly. Look here." Then Mr. Thumble, turning round, showed that the rear portion of his clothes had not escaped without injury.

"It was well he was not going fast, or you would have come on to your head," said Grantly.

"It was a mercy," said Thumble. "But, sir, as it was, I came to the ground with much violence. It was on Spigglewick Hill, where the road is covered with loose stones. I see, sir, you have a gig and horse here, with a servant. Perhaps, as the circumstances are so very peculiar——" Then Mr. Thumble stopped and looked up into the major's face with imploring eyes. But the major had no tenderness for such sufferings. "I am sorry to say that I am going quite the other way," he said. "I am returning to Silverbridge."

Mr. Thumble hesitated, and then made a renewed

request. "If you would not mind taking me to Silverbridge, I could get home from thence by railway; and perhaps you would allow your servant to take the horse to Barchester."

Major Grantly was for a moment dumfounded. "The request is most unreasonable, sir," said Mr. Crawley.

"That is as Major Grantly pleases to look at it," said Mr. Thumble.

"I am sorry to say that it is quite out of my power," said the major.

"You can surely walk, leading the beast, if you fear to mount him," said Mr. Crawley.

"I shall do as I please about that," said Mr. Thumble. "And, Mr. Crawley, if you will have the kindness to leave things in the parish just as they are,—just as they are, I will be obliged to you. It is the bishop's wish that you should touch nothing." Mr. Thumble was by this time on the step, and Mr. Crawley instantly slammed the door.

"The gentleman is a clergyman from Barchester," said Mr. Crawley, modestly folding his hands upon his breast, "whom the bishop has sent over here to take upon himself temporarily the services of the church, and, as it appears, the duties also of the parish. I refrain from animadverting upon his lordship's choice."

"And are you leaving Hogglestock?"

"When I have found a shelter for my wife and children I shall do so; nay, peradventure, I must do so before any such shelter can be found. I shall proceed in that matter as I am bid. I am one who can regard myself as no longer possessing the privilege of free action in anything. But while I have a room at your service, permit me to ask you to enter it." Then Mr.

Crawley motioned him in with his hand, and Major Grantly found himself in the presence of Mrs. Crawley and her younger daughter.

He looked at them both for a moment, and could trace much of the lines of that face which he loved so well. But the troubles of life had almost robbed the elder lady of her beauty; and with the younger, the awkward thinness of the last years of feminine childhood had not yet given place to the fulfilment of feminine grace. But the likeness in each was quite enough to make him feel that he ought to be at home in that room. He thought that he could love the woman as his mother, and the girl as his sister. He found it very difficult to begin any conversation in their presence, and yet it seemed to be his duty to begin. Mr. Crawley had marshalled him into the room, and having done so, stood aside near the door. Mrs. Crawley had received him very graciously, and having done so, seemed to be ashamed of her own hospitality. Poor Jane had shrunk back into a distant corner, near the open standing desk at which she was accustomed to read Greek to her father, and, of course, could not be expected to speak. If Major Grantly could have found himself alone with any one of the three,—nay, if he could have been there with any two, he could have opened his budget at once; but, before all the family, he felt the difficulty of the situation. "Mrs. Crawley," said he, "I have been most anxious to make your acquaintance, and I trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in calling."

"I feel grateful to you, as I am sure does also my husband." So much she said, and then felt angry with herself for saying so much. Was she not express-

ing her strong hope that he might stand fast by her child, whereby the whole Crawley family would gain so much,—and the Grantly family lose much, in the same proportion?

"Sir," said Mr. Crawley, "I owe you thanks, still unexpressed, in that you came forward, together with Mr. Robarts of Framley, to satisfy the not unnatural requisition of the magistrates before whom I was called upon to appear in the early winter. I know not why any one should have ventured into such jeopardy on my account."

"There was no jeopardy, Mr. Crawley. Any one in the county would have done it."

"I know not that; nor can I see that there was no jeopardy. I trust that I may assure you that there is no danger;—none, I mean, to you. The danger to myself and those belonging to me is, alas, very urgent. The facts of my position are pressing close upon me. Methinks I suffer more from the visit of the gentleman who has just departed from me than from anything that has yet happened to me. And yet he is in his right;—he is altogether in his right."

"No, papa; he is not," said Jane, from her standing-ground near the upright desk.

"My dear," said her father, "you should be silent on such a subject. It is a matter hard to be understood in all its bearings,—even by those who are most conversant with them. But as to this we need not trouble Major Grantly."

After that there was silence among them, and for a while it seemed as though there could be no approach to the subject on which Grantly had come hither to express himself. Mrs. Crawley, in her despair, said

something about the weather; and the major, trying to draw near the special subject, became bold enough to remark "that he had had the pleasure of seeing Miss Crawley at Framley." "Mrs. Robarts has been very kind," said Mrs. Crawley, "very kind indeed. You can understand, Major Grantly, that this must be a very sad house for any young person." "I don't think it is at all sad," said Jane, still standing in the corner by the upright desk.

Then Major Grantly rose from his seat and walked across to the girl and took her hand. "You are so like your sister," said he. "Your sister is a great friend of mine. She has often spoken to me of you. I hope we shall be friends some day." But Jane could make no answer to this, though she had been able to vindicate the general character of the house while she was left in her corner by herself. "I wonder whether you would be angry with me," continued the major, "if I told you that I wanted to speak a word to your father and mother alone?" To this Jane made no reply, but was out of the room almost before the words had reached the ears of her father and mother. Though she was only sixteen, and had as yet read nothing but Latin and Greek,—unless we are to count the twelve books of Euclid, and Wood's Algebra, and sundry smaller exercises of the same description,—she understood, as well as any one then present, the reason why her absence was required.

As she closed the door the major paused for a moment, expecting, or perhaps hoping, that the father or the mother would say a word. But neither of them had a word to say. They sat silent, as though conscience-stricken. Here was a rich man come, of whom

they had heard that he might probably wish to wed their daughter. It was manifest enough to both of them that no man could marry into their family without subjecting himself to a heavy portion of that reproach and disgrace which was attached to them. But how was it possible that they should not care more for their daughter,—for their own flesh and blood, than for the incidental welfare of this rich man? As regarded the man himself they had heard everything that was good. Such a marriage was like the opening of Paradise to their child. "Nil conscire sibi," said the father to himself, as he buckled on his armour for the fight.

When he had waited for a moment or two the major began. "Mrs. Crawley," he said, addressing himself to the mother, "I do not quite know how far you may be aware that I,—that I have for some time been,—been acquainted with your eldest daughter."

"I have heard from her that she is acquainted with you," said Mrs. Crawley, almost panting with anxiety.

"I may as well make a clean breast of it at once," said the major, smiling, "and say outright that I have come here to request your permission and her father's to ask her to be my wife." Then he was silent, and for a few moments neither Mr. nor Mrs. Crawley replied to him. She looked at her husband, and he gazed at the fire, and the smile died away from the major's face, as he watched the solemnity of them both. There was something almost forbidding in the peculiar gravity of Mr. Crawley's countenance when, as at present, something operated within him to cause him to express dissent from any proposition that was made to him. "I do not know how far this may be

altogether new to you, Mrs. Crawley," said the major, waiting for a reply.

"It is not new to us," said Mrs. Crawley.

"May I hope, then, that you will not disapprove?"

"Sir," said Mr. Crawley, "I am so placed by the untoward circumstances of my life that I can hardly claim to exercise over my own daughter that authority which should belong to a parent."

"My dear, do not say that," exclaimed Mrs. Crawley.

"But I do say it. Within three weeks of this time I may be a prisoner, subject to the criminal laws of my country. At this moment I am without the power of earning bread for myself, or for my wife, or for my children. Major Grantly, you have even now seen the departure of the gentleman who has been sent here to take my place in this parish. I am, as it were, an outlaw here, and entitled neither to obedience nor respect from those who under other circumstances would be bound to give me both."

"Major Grantly," said the poor woman, "no husband or father in the county is more closely obeyed or more thoroughly respected and loved."

"I am sure of it," said the major.

"All this, however, matters nothing," continued Mr. Crawley, "and all speech on such homely matters would amount to an impertinence before you, sir, were it not that you have hinted at a purpose of connecting yourself at some future time with this unfortunate family."

"I meant to be plain-spoken, Mr. Crawley."

"I did not mean to insinuate, sir, that there was aught of reticence in your words, so contrived that

you might fall back upon the vagueness of your expression for protection, should you hereafter see fit to change your purpose. I should have wronged you much by such a suggestion. I rather was minded to make known to you that I,—or, I should rather say, we," and Mr. Crawley pointed to his wife,—"shall not accept your plainness of speech as betokening aught beyond a conceived idea in furtherance of which you have thought it expedient to make certain inquiries."

"I don't quite follow you," said the major. "But what I want you to do, is to give me your consent to visit your daughter; and I want Mrs. Crawley to write to Grace and tell her that it 's all right." Mrs. Crawley was quite sure that it was all right, and was ready to sit down and write the letter that moment, if her husband would permit her to do so.

"I am sorry that I have not been explicit," said Mr. Crawley, "but I will endeavour to make myself more plainly intelligible. My daughter, sir, is so circumstanced in reference to her father, that I, as her father and as a gentleman, cannot encourage any man to make a tender to her of his hand."

"But I have made up my mind about all that."

"And I, sir, have made up mine. I dare not tell my girl that I think she will do well to place her hand in yours. A lady, when she does that, should feel at least that her hand is clean."

"It is the cleanest and the sweetest and the fairest hand in Barsetshire," said the major. Mrs. Crawley could not restrain herself, but running up to him, took his hand in hers and kissed it.

"There is unfortunately a stain, which is vicarial," began Mr. Crawley, sustaining up to that point his

voice with Roman fortitude,—with a fortitude which would have been Roman had it not at that moment broken down under the pressure of human feeling. He could keep it up no longer, but continued his speech with broken sobs, and with a voice altogether changed in its tone,—rapid now, whereas it had before been slow,—natural, whereas it had hitherto been affected,—human, whereas it had hitherto been Roman. "Major Grantly," he said, "I am sore beset; but what can I say to you? My darling is as pure as the light of day,—only that she is soiled with my impurity. She is fit to grace the house of the best gentleman in England, had I not made her unfit."

"She shall grace mine," said the major. "By God, she shall!—to-morrow, if she 'll have me." Mrs. Crawley, who was standing beside him, again raised his hand and kissed it.

"It may not be so. As I began to say, or rather strove to say, for I have been overtaken by weakness, and cannot speak my mind,—I cannot claim authority over my child as would another man. How can I exercise authority from between a prison's bars?"

"She would obey your slightest wish," said Mrs. Crawley.

"I could express no wish," said he. "But I know my girl, and I am sure that she will not consent to take infamy with her into the house of the man who loves her."

"There will be no infamy," said the major. "Infamy! I tell you that I shall be proud of the connection."

"You, sir, are generous in your prosperity. We will strive to be at least just in our adversity. My wife

and children are to be pitied,—because of the husband and the father."

"No!" said Mrs. Crawley. "I will not hear that said without denying it."

"But they must take their lot as it has been given to them," continued he. "Such a position in life as that which you have proposed to bestow upon my child would be to her, as regards human affairs, great elevation. And from what I have heard,—I may be permitted to add also from what I now learn by personal experience,—such a marriage would be laden with fair promise of future happiness. But if you ask my mind, I think that my child is not free to make it. You, sir, have many relatives, who are not in love, as you are, all of whom would be affected by the stain of my disgrace. You have a daughter, to whom all your solicitude is due. No one should go to your house as your second wife who cannot feel that she will serve your child. My daughter would feel that she was bringing an injury upon the babe. I cannot bid her do this,—and I will not. Nor do I believe that she would do so if I bade her." Then he turned his chair around, and sat with his face to the wall, wiping away the tears with a tattered handkerchief.

Mrs. Crawley led the major away to the further window, and there stood looking up into his face. It need hardly be said that they also were crying. Whose eyes could have been dry after such a scene, upon hearing such words? "You had better go," said Mrs. Crawley. "I know him so well. You had better go."

"Mrs. Crawley," he said, whispering to her, "if I ever desert her, may all that I love desert me! But you will help me?"

"You would want no help, were it not for this trouble."

"But you will help me?"

Then she paused a moment. "I can do nothing," she said, "but what he bids me."

"You will trust me, at any rate?" said the major.

"I do trust you," she replied. Then he went without saying a word further to Mr. Crawley. As soon as he was gone, the wife went over to her husband, and put her arm gently around his neck as he was sitting. For a while the husband took no notice of his wife's caress, but sat motionless, with his face still turned to the wall. Then she spoke to him a word or two, telling him that their visitor was gone. "My child!" he said. "My poor child! my darling! She has found grace in this man's sight; but even of that has her father robbed her! The Lord has visited upon the children the sins of the father, and will do so to the third and fourth generation."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRAGEDY IN HOOK COURT.

Conway Dalrymple had hurried out of the room in Mrs. Broughton's house in which he had been painting Jael and Sisera, thinking that it would be better to meet an angry and perhaps tipsy husband on the stairs, than it would be either to wait for him till he should make his way into his wife's room, or to hide away from him with the view of escaping altogether from so disagreeable an encounter. He had no fear of the man. He did not think that there would be any violence,—nor, as regarded himself, did he much care if there was to be violence. But he felt that he was bound, as far as it might be possible, to screen the poor woman from the ill effects of her husband's temper and condition. He was, therefore, prepared to stop Broughton on the stairs, and to use some force in arresting him on his way, should he find the man to be really intoxicated. But he had not descended above a stair or two before he was aware that the man below him, whose step had been heard in the hall, was not intoxicated, and that he was not Dobbs Broughton. It was Mr. Musselboro.

"It is you, is it?" said Conway. "I thought it was Broughton." Then he looked into the man's face and saw that he was ashy pale. All that appearance of

low-bred jauntiness which used to belong to him seemed to have been washed out of him. His hair had forgotten to curl, his gloves had been thrown aside, and even his trinkets were out of sight. "What has happened?" said Conway. "What is the matter? Something is wrong." Then it occurred to him that Musselboro had been sent to the house to tell the wife of the husband's ruin.

"The servant told me that I should find you upstairs," said Musselboro.

"Yes; I have been painting here. For some time past I have been doing a picture of Miss Van Siever. Mrs. Van Siever has been here to-day." Conway thought that this information would produce some strong effect on Clara's proposed husband; but he did not seem to regard the matter of the picture nor the mention of Miss Van Siever's name.

"She knows nothing of it?" said he. "She does n't know yet?"

"Know what?" asked Conway. "She knows that her husband has lost money."

"Dobbs has—destroyed himself."

"What!"

"Blew his brains out this morning just inside the entrance at Hook Court. The horror of drink was on him, and he stood just in the pathway and shot himself. Bangles was standing at the top of their vaults and saw him do it. I don't think Bangles will ever be a man again. O Lord! I shall never get over it myself. The body was there when I went in." Then Musselboro sank back against the wall of the staircase, and stared at Dalrymple as though he still saw before him the terrible sight of which he had just spoken.

Dalrymple seated himself on the stairs and strove to bring his mind to bear on the tale which he had just heard. What was he to do, and how was that poor woman upstairs to be informed? "You came here intending to tell her?" he said in a whisper. He feared every moment that Mrs. Broughton would appear on the stairs, and learn from a word or two what had happened without any hint to prepare her for the catastrophe.

"I thought you would be here. I knew you were doing the picture. He knew it. He had a letter to say so,—one of those anonymous ones."

"But that did n't influence him?"

"I don't think it was that," said Musselboro. "He meant to have had it out with her; but it was n't that as brought this about. Perhaps you did n't know that he was clean ruined?"

"She had told me."

"Then she knew it?"

"Oh, yes; she knew that. Mrs. Van Siever had told her. Poor creature! How are we to break this to her?"

"You and she are very thick," said Musselboro. "I suppose you 'll do it best." By this time they were in the drawing-room, and the door was closed. Dalrymple had put his hand on the other man's arm, and had led him downstairs, out of reach of hearing from the room above. "You 'll tell her,—won't you?" said Musselboro. Then Dalrymple tried to think what loving female friend there was who could break the news to the unfortunate woman. He knew of the Van Sievers, and he knew of the Demolines, and he also knew that there was no other woman within reach whom he

was entitled to regard as closely connected with Mrs. Broughton. He was well aware that the anonymous letter of which Musselboro had just spoken had come from Miss Demolines, and he could not go there for sympathy and assistance. Nor could he apply to Mrs. Van Siever after what had passed this morning. To Clara Van Siever he would have applied but that it was impossible he should reach Clara except through her mother. "I suppose I had better go to her," he said after a while. And then he went, leaving Musselboro in the drawing-room. "I 'm so bad with it," said Musselboro, "that I really don't know how I shall ever go up that court again."

Conway Dalrymple made his way up the stairs with very slow steps, and as he did so he could not but think seriously of the nature of his friendship with this woman, and could not but condemn himself heartily for the folly and iniquity of his own conduct. Scores of times he had professed his love to her with half-expressed words, intended to mean nothing, as he said to himself when he tried to excuse himself, but enough to turn her head even if they did not reach her heart. Now, this woman was a widow, and it came to be his duty to tell her that she was so. What if she should claim from him now the love which he had so often proffered to her! It was not that he feared that she would claim anything from him at this moment,—neither now, nor to-morrow, nor the next day,—but the agony of the present meeting would produce others in which there would be some tenderness mixed with the agony; and so from one meeting to another the thing would progress. Dalrymple knew well enough how such things might progress. But in this danger before

him, it was not of himself that he was thinking, but of her. How could he assist her at such a time without doing her more injury than benefit? And if he did not assist her, who would do so? He knew her to be heartless; but even heartless people have hearts which can be touched and almost broken by certain sorrows. Her heart would not be broken by her husband's death, but it would become very sore if she were utterly neglected. He was now at the door, with his hand on the lock, and was wondering why she should remain so long within without making herself heard. Then he opened it, and found her seated in a lounging-chair, with her back to the door, and he could see that she had a volume of a novel in her hand. He understood it all. She was pretending to be indifferent to her husband's return. He walked up to her, thinking that she would recognise his step; but she made no sign of turning towards him. He saw the motion of her hair over the back of the chair as she affected to make herself luxuriously comfortable. She was striving to let her husband see that she cared nothing for him, or for his condition, or for his jealousy, if he were jealous,—or even for his ruin. "Mrs. Broughton," he said, when he was close to her. Then she jumped up quickly, and turned round, facing him. "Where is Dobbs?" she said. "Where is Broughton?"

"He is not here."

"He is in the house, for I heard him. Why have you come back?"

Dalrymple's eye fell on the tattered canvas, and he thought of the doings of the past month. He thought of the picture of three Graces, which was hanging in the room below, and he thoroughly wished that he had

never been introduced to the Broughton establishment. How was he to get through his present difficulty? "No," said he, "Broughton did not come. It was Mr. Musselboro whose steps you heard below."

"What is he here for? What is he doing here? Where is Dobbs? Conway, there is something the matter. He has gone off!"

"Yes;—he has gone off."

"The coward!"

"No; he was not a coward;—not in that way."

The use of the past tense, unintentional as it had been, told the story to the woman at once. "He is dead," she said. Then he took both her hands in his, and looked into her face without speaking a word. And she gazed at him with fixed eyes, and rigid mouth, while the quick coming breath just moved the curl of her nostrils. It occurred to him at the moment that he had never before seen her so wholly unaffected, and had never before observed that she was so totally deficient in all the elements of real beauty. She was the first to speak again. "Conway," she said, "tell it me all. Why do you not speak to me?"

"There is nothing further to tell," said he.

Then she dropped his hands and walked away from him to the window, and stood there looking out upon the stuccoed turret of a huge house that stood opposite. As she did so she was employing herself in counting the windows. Her mind was paralysed by the blow, and she knew not how to make any exertion with it for any purpose. Everything was changed with her,—and was changed in such a way that she could make no guess as to her future mode of life. She was suddenly a widow, a pauper, and utterly desolate,—while the

only person in the whole world that she really liked was standing close to her. But in the midst of it all she counted the windows of the house opposite. Had it been possible for her she would have put her mind altogether to sleep.

He let her stand for a few minutes and then joined her at the window. "My friend," he said, "what shall I do for you?"

"Do?" she said. "What do you mean by—doing?"

"Come and sit down and let me talk to you," he replied. Then he led her to the sofa, and as she seated herself I doubt whether she had not almost forgotten that her husband was dead.

"What a pity it was to cut it up," she said, pointing to the rags of Jael and Sisera.

"Never mind the picture now. Dreadful as it is, you must allow yourself to think of him for a few minutes."

"Think of what! O God! yes. Conway, you must tell me what to do. Was everything gone? It is n't about myself. I don't mind about myself. I wish it was me instead of him. I do. I do."

"No wishing is of any avail."

"But, Conway, how did it happen? Do you think it is true? That man would say anything to gain his object. Is he here now?"

"I believe he is here still."

"I won't see him. Remember that. Nothing on earth shall make me see him."

"It may be necessary, but I do not think it will be; —at any rate not yet."

"I will never see him. I believe that he has murdered my husband. I do. I feel sure of it. Now I think of it I am quite sure of it. And he will murder

you too;—about that girl. He will. I tell you I know the man." Dalrymple simply shook his head, smiling sadly. "Very well! you will see. But, Conway, how do you know that it is true? Do you believe it yourself?"

"I do believe it."

"And how did it happen?"

"He could not bear the ruin that he had brought upon himself and you."

"Then;—then——" She went no further in her speech; but Dalrymple assented by a slight motion of his head, and she had been informed sufficiently that her husband had perished by his own hand. "What am I to do?" she said. "Oh, Conway; you must tell me. Was there ever so miserable a woman! Was it——poison?"

He got up and walked quickly across the room and back again to the place where she was sitting. "Never mind about that now. You shall know all that in time. Do not ask any questions about that. If I were you I think I would go to bed. You will be better there than up, and this shock will make you sleep."

"No," she said. "I will not go to bed. How should I know that that man would not come to me and kill me? I believe he murdered Dobbs;—I do. You are not going to leave me, Conway?"

"I think I had better, for a while. There are things which should be done. Shall I send one of the women to you?"

"There is not one of them that cares for me in the least. Oh, Conway, do not go; not yet. I will not be left alone in the house with him. You will be very cruel if you go and leave me now,—when you have so

often said that you,—that you,—that you were my friend." And now, at last, she began to weep.

"I think it will be best," he said, "that I should go to Mrs. Van Siever. If I can manage it I will get Clara to come to you."

"I do not want her," said Mrs. Broughton. "She is a heartless, cold creature, and I do not want to have her near me. My poor husband was ruined among them;—yes, ruined among them. It has all been done that she may marry that horrid man and live here in this house. I have known ever so long that he has not been safe among them."

"You need fear nothing from Clara," said Dalrymple, with some touch of anger in his voice.

"Of course you will say so. I can understand that very well. And it is natural that you should wish to be with her. Pray go."

Then he sat beside her, and took her hand, and endeavoured to speak to her so seriously, that she herself might become serious, and if it might be possible, in some degree contemplative. He told her how necessary it was that she should have some woman near her in her trouble, and explained to her that as far as he knew her female friends, there would be no one who would be so considerate with her as Clara Van Siever. She at one time mentioned the name of Miss Demolines; but Dalrymple altogether opposed the notion of sending for that lady,—expressing his opinion that the amiable Madalina had done all in her power to create quarrels both between Mrs. Broughton and her husband and between Dobbs Broughton and Mrs. Van Siever. And he spoke his opinion very fully about Miss Demolines. "And yet you liked her once," said

Mrs. Broughton. "I never liked her," said Dalrymple with energy. "But all that matters nothing now. Of course you can send for her if you please; but I do not think her trustworthy, and I will not willingly come in contact with her." Then Mrs. Broughton gave him to understand that of course she must give way, but that in giving way she felt herself to be submitting to that ill-usage which is the ordinary lot of women, and to which she, among women, had been specially subjected. She did not exactly say as much, fearing that if she did he would leave her altogether; but that was the gist of her plaints and wails, and final acquiescence.

"And you are going?" she said, catching hold of his arm.

"I will employ myself altogether and only about your affairs, till I see you again."

"But I want you to stay."

"It would be madness. Look here;—lie down till Clara comes or till I return. Do not go beyond this room and your own. If she cannot come this evening I will return. Good-bye now. I will see the servants as I go out, and tell them what ought to be told."

"Oh, Conway," she said, clutching hold of him again, "I know that you despise me."

"I do not despise you, and I will be as good a friend to you as I can. God bless you." Then he went, and as he descended the stairs he could not refrain from telling himself that he did in truth despise her.

His first object was to find Musselboro, and to dismiss that gentleman from the house. For though he himself did not attribute to Mrs. Van Siever's favourite

any of those terrible crimes and potentialities for crime with which Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had invested him, still he thought it reasonable that the poor woman upstairs should not be subjected to the necessity of either seeing him or hearing him. But Musselboro had gone, and Dalrymple could not learn from the head woman-servant whom he saw, whether before going he had told to any one in the house the tale of the catastrophe which had happened in the City. Servants are wonderful actors, looking often as though they knew nothing when they know everything,—as though they understood nothing when they understand all. Dalrymple made known all that was necessary, and the discreet upper-servant listened to the tale with a proper amount of awe and horror and commiseration. "Shot hisself in the City;—laws! You 'll excuse me, sir, but we all know'd as master was coming to no good." But she promised to do her best with her mistress,—and kept her promise. It is seldom that servants are not good in such straits as that.

From Mrs. Broughton's house Dalrymple went directly to Mrs. Van Siever's, and learned that Musselboro had been there about half an hour before, and had then gone off in a cab with Mrs. Van Siever. It was now nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, and no one in the house knew when Mrs. Van Siever would be back. Miss Van Siever was out, and had been out when Mr. Musselboro had called, but was expected in every minute. Conway therefore said that he would call again, and on returning found Clara alone. She had not then heard a word of the fate of Dobbs Broughton. Of course she would go at once to Mrs. Broughton, and if necessary stay with her during the

night. She wrote a line at once to her mother, saying where she was, and went across to Mrs. Broughton leaning on Dalrymple's arm. "Be good to her," said Conway, as he left her at the door. "I will," said Clara. "I will be as kind as my nature will allow me." "And remember," said Conway, whispering into her ear as he pressed her hand at leaving her, "that you are all the world to me." It was perhaps not a proper time for an expression of love, but Clara Van Siever forgave the impropriety.

CHAPTER X.

MISS VAN SIEVER MAKES HER CHOICE.

Clara Van Siever did stay all that night with Mrs. Broughton. In the course of the evening she received a note from her mother, in which she was told to come home to breakfast. "You can go back to her afterwards," said Mrs. Van Siever; "and I will see her myself in the course of the day, if she will let me." The note was written on a scrap of paper, and had neither beginning nor end; but this was after the manner of Mrs. Van Siever, and Clara was not in the least hurt or surprised. "My mother will come to see you after breakfast," said Clara, as she was taking her leave.

"Oh, goodness! And what shall I say to her?"

"You will have to say very little. She will speak to you."

"I suppose everything belongs to her now," said Mrs. Broughton.

"I know nothing about that. I never do know anything of mamma's money matters."

"Of course she 'll turn me out. I do not mind a bit about that,—only I hope that she 'll let me have some mourning." Then she made Clara promise that she would return as soon as possible, having in Clara's presence overcome all that feeling of dislike which she

had expressed to Conway Dalrymple. Mrs. Broughton was generally affectionate to those who were near to her. Had Musselboro forced himself into her presence, she would have become quite confidential with him before he left her.

"Mr. Musselboro will be here directly," said Mrs. Van Siever, as she was starting for Mrs. Broughton's house. "You had better tell him to come to me there; or, stop,—perhaps you had better keep him here till I come back. Tell him to be sure and wait for me."

"Very well, mamma. I suppose he can wait below?"

"Why should he wait below?" said Mrs. Van Siever, very angrily.

Clara had made the uncourteous proposition to her mother with the express intention of making it understood that she would have nothing to say to him. "He can come upstairs if he likes it," said Clara; "and I will go up to my room."

"If you fight shy of him, miss, you may remember this,—that you will fight shy of me at the same time."

"I am sorry for that, mamma, for I shall certainly fight shy of Mr. Musselboro."

"You can do as you please. I can't force you, and I shan't try. But I can make your life a burden to you, and I will. What 's the matter with the man that he is n't good enough for you? He 's as good as any of your own people ever was. I hate your new-fangled airs,—with pictures painted on the sly, and all the rest of it. I hate such ways. See what they have brought that wretched man to, and the poor fool his wife. If you go and marry that painter some of these days you 'll

be very much like what she is. Only I doubt whether he has got courage enough to blow his brains out." With these comfortable words, the old woman took herself off, leaving Clara to entertain her lover as best she might choose.

Mr. Musselboro was not long in coming, and, in accordance with Mrs. Van Siever's implied directions to her daughter, was shown up into the drawing-room. Clara gave him her mother's message in a very few words. "I was expressly told, sir, to ask you to stop, if it is not inconvenient, as she very much wants to see you." Mr. Musselboro declared that of course he would stop. He was only too happy to have an opportunity of remaining in such delightful society. As Clara answered nothing to this, he went on to say that he hoped that the melancholy occasion of Mrs. Van Siever's visit to Mrs. Broughton might make a long absence necessary,—he did not, indeed, care how long it might be. He had recovered now from that paleness, and that want of gloves and jewellery which had befallen him on the previous day immediately after the sight he had seen in the city. Clara made no answer to the last speech, but, putting some things together in her work-basket, prepared to leave the room. "I hope you are not going to leave me?" he said, in a voice that was intended to convey much of love, and something of melancholy.

"I am so shocked by what has happened, Mr. Musselboro, that I am altogether unfit for conversation. I was with poor Mrs. Broughton last night, and I shall return to her when mamma comes home."

"It is sad, certainly; but what was there to be expected? If you 'd only seen how he used to go on."

To this Clara made no answer. "Don't go yet," said he; "there is something that I want to say to you. There is, indeed."

Clara Van Siever was a young woman whose presence of mind rarely deserted her. It occurred to her now that she must undergo on some occasion the nuisance of a direct offer from this man, and that she could have no better opportunity of answering him after her own fashion than the present. Her mother was absent, and the field was her own. And, moreover, it was a point in her favour that the tragedy which had so lately occurred, and to which she had just now alluded, would give her a fair excuse for additional severity. At such a moment no man could, she told herself, be justified in making an offer of his love, and therefore she might rebuke him with the less remorse. I wonder whether the last words which Conway Dalrymple had spoken to her stung her conscience as she thought of this! She had now reached the door, and was standing close to it. As Mr. Musselboro did not at once begin, she encouraged him. "If you have anything special to tell me, of course I will hear you," she said.

"Miss Clara," he began, rising from his chair, and coming into the middle of the room, "I think you know what my wishes are." Then he put his hand upon his heart. "And your respected mother is of the same way of thinking. It 's that that emboldens me to be so sudden. Not but what my heart has been yours and yours only all along, before the old lady so much as mentioned it." Clara would give him no assistance, not even the aid of a negative, but stood there quite passive, with her hand on the door. "Since I first had

the pleasure of seeing you I have always said to myself, 'Augustus Musselboro, that is the woman for you, if you can only win her.' But then there was so much against me,—was n't there?" She would not even take advantage of this by assuring him that there certainly always had been much against him, but allowed him to go on till he should run out all the length of his tether. "I mean, of course, in the way of money," he continued. "I had n't much that I could call my own when your respected mamma first allowed me to become acquainted with you. But it 's different now; and I think I may say that I 'm all right in that respect. Poor Broughton's going in this way will make it a deal smoother to me; and I may say that I and your mamma will be all in all to each other now about money." Then he stopped.

"I don't quite understand what you mean by all this," said Clara.

"I mean that there is n't a more devoted fellow in all London than what I am to you." Then he was about to go down on one knee, but it occurred to him that it would not be convenient to kneel to a lady who would stand quite close to the door. "One and one, if they 're put together well, will often make more than two, and so they shall with us," said Musselboro, who began to feel that it might be expedient to throw a little spirit into his words.

"If you have done," said Clara, "you may as well hear me for a minute. And I hope you will have sense to understand that I really mean what I say."

"I hope you will remember what are your mamma's wishes."

"Mamma's wishes have no influence whatsoever

with me in such matters as this. Mamma's arrangements with you are for her own convenience, and I am not a party to them. I do not know anything about mamma's money, and I do not want to know. But under no possible circumstances will I consent to become your wife. Nothing that mamma could say or do would induce me even to think of it. I hope you will be man enough to take this for an answer, and say nothing more about it."

"But, Miss Clara——"

"It 's no good your Miss Claraing me, sir. What I have said you may be sure I mean. Good-morning, sir." Then she opened the door, and left him.

"By Jove, she is a Tartar," said Musselboro to himself, when he was alone. "They 're both Tartars, but the younger is the worse." Then he began to speculate whether Fortune was not doing the best for him in so arranging that he might have the use of the Tartar-mother's money without binding himself to endure for life the Tartar qualities of the daughter.

It had been understood that Clara was to wait at home till her mother should return before she again went across to Mrs. Broughton. At about eleven Mrs. Van Siever came in, and her daughter intercepted her at the dining-room door before she had made her way upstairs to Mr. Musselboro. "How is she, mamma?" said Clara, with something of hypocrisy in her assumed interest for Mrs. Broughton.

"She is an idiot," said Mrs. Van Siever.

"She has had a terrible misfortune!"

"That is no reason why she should be an idiot; and she is heartless too. She never cared a bit for him;—not a bit."

"He was a man whom it was impossible to care for much. I will go to her now, mamma."

"Where is Musselboro?"

"He is upstairs."

"Well?"

"Mamma, that is quite out of the question. Quite. I would not marry him to save myself from starving."

"You do not know what starving is yet, my dear. Tell me the truth at once. Are you engaged to that painter?" Clara paused a moment before she answered, not hesitating as to the expediency of telling her mother any truth on the matter in question, but doubting what the truth might really be. Could she say that she was engaged to Mr. Dalrymple, or could she say that she was not? "If you tell me a lie, miss, I 'll have you put out of the house."

"I certainly shall not tell you a lie. Mr. Dalrymple has asked me to be his wife, and I have made him no answer. If he asks me again I shall accept him."

"Then I order you not to leave this house," said Mrs. Van Siever.

"Surely I may go to Mrs. Broughton?"

"I order you not to leave this house," said Mrs. Van Siever again,—and thereupon she stalked out of the dining-room and went upstairs. Clara had been standing with her bonnet on, ready dressed to go out, and the mother made no attempt to send the daughter up to her room. That she did not expect to be obeyed in her order may be inferred from the first words which she spoke to Mr. Musselboro. "She has gone off to that man now. You are no good, Musselboro, at this kind of work."

"You see, Mrs. Van, he had the start of me so

much. And then being at the West End, and all that, gives a man such a standing with a girl!"

"Bother!" said Mrs. Van Siever, as her quick ear caught the sound of the closing hall-door. Clara had stood a minute or two to consider, and then had resolved that she would disobey her mother. She tried to excuse her own conduct to her own satisfaction as she went. "There are some things," she said, "which even a daughter cannot hear from her mother. If she chooses to close the door against me, she must do so."

She found Mrs. Broughton still in bed, and could not but agree with her mother that the woman was both silly and heartless. "Your mother says that everything must be sold up," said Mrs. Broughton.

"At any rate you would hardly choose to remain here," said Clara.

"But I hope she 'll let me have my own things. A great many of them are altogether my own. I know there 's a law that a woman may have her own things, even though her husband has,—done what poor Dobbs did. And I think she was hard upon me about the mourning. They never do mind giving credit for such things as that, and though there is a bill due to Mrs. Morell now, she has had a deal of Dobbs's money." Clara promised her that she should have mourning to her heart's content. "I will see to that myself," she said.

Presently there was a knock at the door, and the discreet head-servant beckoned Clara out of the room. "You are not going away?" said Mrs. Broughton. Clara promised her that she would not go without coming back again. "He will be here soon, I suppose, and perhaps you had better see him; though,

for the matter of that, perhaps you had better not, because he is so much cut up about poor Dobbs." The servant had come up to tell Clara that the "he" in question was at the present moment waiting for her below stairs.

The first words which passed between Dalrymple and Clara had reference to the widow. He told her what he had learned in the City,—that Broughton's property had never been great, and that his personal liabilities at the time of his death were supposed to be small. But he had fallen lately altogether into the hands of Musselboro, who, though penniless himself in the way of capital, was backed by the money of Mrs. Van Siever. There was no doubt that Broughton had destroyed himself in the manner told by Musselboro, but the opinion in the City was that he had done so rather through the effects of drink than because of his losses. As to the widow, Dalrymple thought that Mrs. Van Siever, or nominally, perhaps, Musselboro, might be induced to settle an annuity on her, if she would give up everything quietly. "I doubt whether your mother is not responsible for everything Broughton owed when he died,—for everything, that is, in the way of business; and if so, Mrs. Broughton will certainly have a claim upon the estate." It occurred to Dalrymple once or twice that he was talking to Clara about Mrs. Van Siever as though he and Clara were more closely bound together than were Clara and her mother; but Clara seemed to take this in good part, and was as solicitous as was he himself in the matter of Mrs. Broughton's interest.

Then the discreet head-servant knocked and told them that Mrs. Broughton was very anxious to see

Mr. Dalrymple, but that Miss Van Siever was on no account to go away. She was up, and in her dressing-gown, and had gone into the sitting-room. "I will come directly," said Dalrymple, and the discreet head-servant retired.

"Clara," said Conway, "I do not know when I may have another chance of asking for an answer to my question. You heard my question?"

"Yes, I heard it."

"And will you answer it?"

"If you wish it, I will."

"Of course I wish it. You understood what I said upon the doorstep yesterday?"

"I don't think much of that; men say those things so often. What you said before was serious, I suppose?"

"Serious! Heavens! do you think that I am joking?"

"Mamma wants me to marry Mr. Musselboro."

"He is a vulgar brute. It would be impossible."

"It is impossible; but mamma is very obstinate. I have no fortune of my own,—not a shilling. She told me to-day that she would turn me into the street. She forbade me to come here, thinking I should meet you; but I came, because I had promised Mrs. Broughton. I am sure that she will never give me one shilling."

Dalrymple paused for a moment. It was certainly true that he had regarded Clara Van Siever as an heiress, and had at first been attracted to her because he thought it expedient to marry an heiress. But there had since come something beyond that, and there was perhaps less of regret than most men would have felt as he gave up his golden hopes. He took her into his

arms and kissed her, and called her his own. "Now we understand each other," he said.

"If you wish it to be so."

"I do wish it."

"And I shall tell my mother to-day that I am engaged to you,—unless she refuses to see me. Go to Mrs. Broughton now. I feel that we are almost cruel to be thinking of ourselves in this house at such a time." Upon this Dalrymple went, and Clara Van Siever was left to her reflections. She had never before had a lover. She had never had even a friend whom she loved and trusted. Her life had been passed at school till she was nearly twenty, and since then she had been vainly endeavouring to accommodate herself and her feelings to her mother. Now she was about to throw herself into the absolute power of a man who was nearly a stranger to her! But she did love him, as she had never loved any one else; and then, on the other side, there was Mr. Musselboro!

Dalrymple was upstairs for an hour, and Clara did not see him again before he left the house. It was clear to her, from Mrs. Broughton's first words, that Conway had told her what had passed. "Of course I shall never see anything more of either of you now?" said Mrs. Broughton.

"I should say that probably you will see a great deal of us both."

"There are some people," said Mrs. Broughton, "who can do well for their friends, but can never do well for themselves. I am one of them. I saw at once how great a thing it would be for both of you to bring you together,—especially for you, Clara; and therefore I did it. I may say that I never had it out

of my mind for months past. Poor Dobbs misunderstood what I was doing. God knows how far that may have brought about what has happened."

"Oh, Mrs. Broughton!"

"Of course he could not be blind to one thing;—nor was I. I mention it now because it is right, but I shall never, never allude to it again. Of course he saw, and I saw, that Conway—was attached to me. Poor Conway meant no harm. I was aware of that. But there was the terrible fact. I knew at once that the only cure for him was a marriage with some girl that he could respect. Admiring you as I do, I immediately resolved on bringing you two together. My dear, I have been successful, and I heartily trust that you may be happier than Maria Broughton."

Miss Van Siever knew the woman, understood all the facts, and pitying the condition of the wretched creature, bore all this without a word of rebuke. She scorned to put out her strength against one who was in truth so weak.

CHAPTER XI.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

THINGS were very gloomy at the palace. It has been already said that for many days after Dr. Tempest's visit to Barchester the intercourse between the bishop and Mrs. Proudie had not been of a pleasant nature. He had become so silent, so sullen, and so solitary in his ways, that even her courage had been almost cowed, and for a while she had condescended to use gentler measures, with the hope that she might thus bring her lord round to his usual state of active submission; or perhaps, if we strive to do her full justice, we may say of her that her effort was made conscientiously, with the idea of inducing him to do his duty with proper activity. For she was a woman not without a conscience, and by no means indifferent to the real service which her husband, as bishop of the diocese, was bound to render to the affairs of the church around her. Of her own struggles after personal dominion she was herself unconscious; and no doubt they gave her, when recognised and acknowledged by herself, many stabs to her inner self of which no single being in the world knew anything. And now, as after a while she failed in producing any amelioration in the bishop's mood, her temper also gave way, and things were becoming very gloomy and very unpleasant.

The bishop and his wife were at present alone in the palace. Their married daughter and her husband had left them, and their unmarried daughter was also away. How far the bishop's mood may have produced this solitude in the vast house I will not say. Probably Mrs. Proudie's state of mind may have prevented her from having other guests in the place of those who were gone. She felt herself to be almost disgraced in the eyes of all those around her by her husband's long absence from the common rooms of the house and by his dogged silence at meals. It was better, she thought, that they two should be alone in the palace.

Her own efforts to bring him back to something like life, to some activity of mind if not of body, were made constantly; and when she failed, as she did fail day after day, she would go slowly to her own room, and lock her door, and look back in her solitude at all the days of her life. She had agonies in these minutes of which no one near her knew anything. She would seize with her arm the part of the bed near which she would stand, and hold by it, grasping it, as though she were afraid to fall; and then, when it was at the worst with her, she would go to her closet,—a closet that no eyes ever saw unlocked but her own,—and fill for herself and swallow some draught; and then she would sit down with the Bible before her, and read it sedulously. She spent hours every day with her Bible before her, repeating to herself whole chapters, which she almost knew by heart.

It cannot be said that she was a bad woman, though she had in her time done an indescribable amount of evil. She had endeavoured to do good, failing partly by ignorance and partly from the effects of an un-

bridled, ambitious temper. And now, even amidst her keenest sufferings, her ambition was by no means dead. She still longed to rule the diocese by means of her husband,—but was made to pause and hesitate by the unwonted mood that had fallen upon him. Before this, on more than one occasion, and on one very memorable occasion, he had endeavoured to combat her. He had fought with her, striving to put her down. He had failed, and given up the hope of any escape for himself in that direction. On those occasions her courage had never quailed for a moment. While he openly struggled to be master she could openly struggle to be mistress,—and could enjoy the struggle. But nothing like this moodiness had ever come upon him before.

She had yielded to it for many days, striving to coax him by little softnesses of which she herself had been ashamed as she practised them. They had served her nothing, and at last she determined that something else must be done. If only for his sake, to keep some life in him, something else must be done. Were he to continue as he was now, he must give up his diocese, or, at any rate, declare himself too ill to keep the working of it in his own hands. How she hated Mr. Crawley for all the sorrow that he had brought upon her and her house!

And it was still the affair of Mr. Crawley which urged her on to further action. When the bishop received Mr. Crawley's letter he said nothing of it to her; but he handed it over to his chaplain. The chaplain, fearing to act upon it himself, handed it to Mr. Thumble, whom he knew to be one of the bishop's commission, and Mr. Thumble, equally fearing respon-

sibility in the present state of affairs at the palace, found himself obliged to consult Mrs. Proudie. Mrs. Proudie had no doubt as to what should be done. The man had abdicated his living, and of course some provision must be made for the services. She would again make an attempt upon her husband, and therefore she went into his room holding Mr. Crawley's letter in her hand.

"My dear," she said, "here is Mr. Crawley's letter. I suppose you have read it?"

"Yes," said the bishop; "I have read it."

"And what will you do about it? Something must be done."

"I don't know," said he. He did not even look at her as he spoke. He had not turned his eyes upon her since she had entered the room.

"But, bishop, it is a letter that requires to be acted upon at once. We cannot doubt that the man is doing right at last. He is submitting himself where his submission is due; but his submission will be of no avail unless you take some action upon his letter. Do you not think that Mr. Thumble had better go over?"

"No, I don't. I think Mr. Thumble had better stay where he is," said the irritated bishop.

"What, then, would you wish to have done?"

"Never mind," said he.

"But, bishop, that is nonsense," said Mrs. Proudie, adding something of severity to the tone of her voice.

"No, it is n't nonsense," said he. Still he did not look at her, nor had he done so for a moment since she had entered the room. Mrs. Proudie could not bear this, and as her anger became strong within her breast, she told herself that she would be wrong to bear it.

She had tried what gentleness would do, and she had failed. It was now imperatively necessary that she should resort to sterner measures. She must make him understand that he must give her authority to send Mr. Thumble to Hogglestock.

"Why do you not turn round and speak to me properly?" she said.

"I do not want to speak to you at all," the bishop answered.

This was very bad;—almost anything would be better than this. He was sitting now over the fire, with his elbows on his knees, and his face buried in his hands. She had gone round the room so as to face him, and was now standing almost over him, but still she could not see his countenance. "This will not do at all," she said. "My dear, do you know that you are forgetting yourself altogether?"

"I wish I could forget myself."

"That might be all very well if you were in a position in which you owed no service to any one; or, rather, it would not be well then, but the evil would not be so manifest. You cannot do your duty in the diocese if you continue to sit there doing nothing, with your head upon your hands. Why do you not rally, and get to your work like a man?"

"I wish you would go away and leave me," he said.

"No, bishop, I will not go away and leave you. You have brought yourself to such a condition that it is my duty as your wife to stay by you; and if you neglect your duty, I will not neglect mine."

"It was you that brought me to it."

"No, sir, that is not true. I did not bring you to it."

"It is the truth." And now he got up and looked at her. For a moment he stood upon his legs, and then again he sat down with his face turned towards her. "It is the truth. You have brought on me such disgrace that I cannot hold up my head. You have ruined me. I wish I were dead; and it is all through you that I am driven to wish it."

Of all that she had suffered in her life this was the worst. She clasped both her hands to her side as she listened to him, and for a minute or two she made no reply. When he ceased from speaking he again put his elbows on his knees and again buried his face in his hands. What had she better do, or how was it expedient that she should treat him? At this crisis the whole thing was so important to her that she would have postponed her own ambition and would have curbed her temper had she thought that by doing so she might in any degree have benefited him. But it seemed to her that she could not rouse him by conciliation. Neither could she leave him as he was. Something must be done. "Bishop," she said, "the words that you speak are sinful, very sinful."

"You have made them sinful," he replied.

"I will not hear that from you. I will not indeed. I have endeavoured to do my duty by you, and I do not deserve it. I am endeavouring to do my duty now, and you must know that it would ill become me to remain quiescent while you are in such a state. The world around you is observing you, and knows that you are not doing your work. All I want of you is that you should arouse yourself, and go to your work."

"I could do my work very well," he said, "if you were not here."

"I suppose, then, you wish that I were dead?" said Mrs. Proudie. To this he made no reply, nor did he stir himself. How could flesh and blood bear this,—female flesh and blood,—Mrs. Proudie's flesh and blood? Now, at last, her temper once more got the better of her judgment, probably much to her immediate satisfaction, and she spoke out. "I 'll tell you what it is, my lord: if you are imbecile, I must be active. It is very sad that I should have to assume your authority——"

"I will not allow you to assume my authority."

"I must do so, or must else obtain a medical certificate as to your incapacity, and beg that some neighbouring bishop may administer the diocese. Things shall not go on as they are now. I, at any rate, will do my duty. I shall tell Mr. Thumble that he must go over to Hogglestock, and arrange for the duties of the parish."

"I desire that you will do no such thing," said the bishop, now again looking up at her.

"You may be sure that I shall," said Mrs. Proudie, and then she left the room.

He did not even yet suppose that she would go about this work at once. The condition of his mind was in truth bad, and was becoming worse, probably, from day to day; but still he did make his calculations about things, and now reflected that it would be sufficient if he spoke to his chaplain to-morrow about Mr. Crawley's letter. Since the terrible scene that Dr. Tempest had witnessed, he had never been able to make up his mind as to what great step he would take, but he had made up his mind that some great step was necessary. There were moments in which he thought

that he would resign his bishopric. For such resignation, without acknowledged incompetence on the score of infirmity, the precedents were very few; but even if there were no precedent it would be better to do that than to remain where he was. Of course there would be disgrace. But then it would be disgrace from which he could hide himself. Now there was equal disgrace; and he could not hide himself. And then such a measure as that would bring punishment where punishment was due. It would bring his wife to the ground,—her who had brought him to the ground. The suffering should not be all his own. When she found that her income, and her palace, and her position were all gone, then perhaps she might repent the evil that she had done him. Now, when he was left alone, his mind went back to this, and he did not think of taking immediate measures,—measures on that very day,—to prevent the action of Mr. Thumble.

But Mrs. Proudie did take immediate steps. Mr. Thumble was at this moment in the palace waiting for instructions. It was he who had brought Mr. Crawley's letter to Mrs. Proudie, and she now returned to him with that letter in her hand. The reader will know what was the result. Mr. Thumble was sent off to Hogglestock at once on the bishop's old cob, and, —as will be remembered,—fell into trouble on the road. Late in the afternoon he entered the palace yard, having led the cob by the bridle the whole way home from Hogglestock.

Some hour or two before Mr. Thumble's return Mrs. Proudie returned to her husband, thinking it better to let him know what she had done. She resolved to be very firm with him, but at the same time she deter-

mined not to use harsh language if it could be avoided. "My dear," she said, "I have arranged with Mr. Thumble." She found him on this occasion sitting at his desk with papers before him, with a pen in his hand; and she could see at a glance that nothing had been written on the paper. What would she have thought had she known that when he placed the sheet before him he was proposing to consult the archbishop as to the propriety of his resignation! He had not, however, progressed so far as to write even the date of his letter.

"You have done what?" said he, throwing down the pen.

"I have arranged with Mr. Thumble as to going out to Hogglestock," said she firmly. "Indeed, he has gone already." Then the bishop jumped up from his seat, and rang the bell with violence. "What are you going to do?" said Mrs. Proudie.

"I am going to depart from here," said he. "I will not stay here to be the mark of scorn for all men's fingers. I will resign the diocese."

"You cannot do that," said his wife.

"I can try, at any rate," said he. Then the servant entered. "John," said he, addressing the man, "let Mr. Thumble know the moment he returns to the palace that I wish to see him here. Perhaps he may not come to the palace. In that case let word be sent to his house."

Mrs. Proudie allowed the man to go before she addressed her husband again. "What do you mean to say to Mr. Thumble when you see him?"

"That is nothing to you."

She came up to him and put her hand upon his

shoulder, and spoke to him very gently. "Tom," she said, "is that the way in which you speak to your wife?"

"Yes, it is. You have driven me to it. Why have you taken upon yourself to send that man to Hogglestock?"

"Because it was right to do so. I came to you for instructions, and you would give none."

"I should have given what instructions I pleased in proper time. Thumble shall not go to Hogglestock next Sunday."

"Who shall go, then?"

"Never mind. Nobody. It does not matter to you. If you will leave me now I shall be obliged to you. There will be an end of all this very soon,—very soon."

Mrs. Proudie after this stood for a while thinking what she would say; but she left the room without uttering another word. As she looked at him a hundred different thoughts came into her mind. She had loved him dearly, and she loved him still; but she knew now,—at this moment felt absolutely sure,—that by him she was hated! In spite of all her roughness and temper, Mrs. Proudie was in this like other women,—that she would fain have been loved had it been possible. She had always meant to serve him. She was conscious of that;—conscious also in a way that, although she had been industrious, although she had been faithful, although she was clever, yet she had failed. At the bottom of her heart she knew that she had been a bad wife. And yet she had meant to be a pattern wife! She had meant to be a good Christian; but she had so exercised her Christianity that not a

soul in the world loved her, or would endure her presence if it could be avoided! She had sufficient insight to the minds and feelings of those around her to be aware of this. And now her husband had told her that her tyranny to him was so overbearing that he must throw up his great position and retire to an obscurity that would be exceptionally disgraceful to them both, because he could no longer endure the public disgrace which her conduct brought upon him in his high place before the world! Her heart was too full for speech; and she left him, very quietly closing the door behind her.

She was preparing to go up to her chamber, with her hand on the banisters and with her foot on the stairs, when she saw the servant who had answered the bishop's bell. "John," she said, "when Mr. Thumble comes to the palace, let me see him before he goes to my lord."

"Yes, ma'am," said John, who well understood the nature of these quarrels between his master and his mistress. But the commands of the mistress were still paramount among the servants, and John proceeded on his mission with a view of accomplishing Mrs. Proudie's behests. Then Mrs. Proudie went upstairs to her chamber, and locked her door.

Mr. Thumble returned to Barchester that day, leading the broken-down cob; and a dreadful walk he had. He was not good at walking, and before he came near Barchester had come to entertain a violent hatred for the beast he was leading. The leading of a horse that is tired, or in pain, or lame, or even stiff in his limbs, is not pleasant work. The brute will not accommodate his paces to the man, and will contrive

to make his head very heavy on the bridle. And he will not walk on the part of the road which the man intends for him, but will lean against the man, and will make himself altogether disagreeable. It may be understood, therefore, that Mr. Thumble was not in a good humour when he entered the palace yard. Nor was he altogether quiet in his mind as to the injury which he had done to the animal. "It was the brute's fault," said Mr. Thumble. "It comes generally of not knowing how to ride 'em," said the groom. For Mr. Thumble, though he often had a horse out of the episcopal stables, was not ready with his shillings to the man who waited upon him with the steed.

He had not, however, come to any satisfactory understanding respecting the broken knees when the footman from the palace told him he was wanted. It was in vain that Mr. Thumble pleaded that he was nearly dead with fatigue, that he had walked all the way from Hogglestock and must go home to change his clothes. John was peremptory with him, insisting that he must wait first upon Mrs. Proudie and then upon the bishop. Mr. Thumble might perhaps have turned a deaf ear to the latter command, but the former was one which he felt himself bound to obey. So he entered the palace, rather cross, very much soiled as to his outer man; and in this condition went up a certain small staircase which was familiar to him, to a small parlour which adjoined Mrs. Proudie's room, and there awaited the arrival of the lady. That he should be required to wait some quarter of an hour was not surprising to him; but when half an hour was gone, and he remembered himself of his own wife at home, and of the dinner which he had not yet eaten, he ven-

tured to ring the bell. Mrs. Proudie's own maid, Mrs. Draper by name, came to him, and said that she had knocked twice at Mrs. Proudie's door, and would knock again. Two minutes after that she returned, running into the room with her arms extended, and exclaiming, "Oh, heavens, sir; mistress is dead!" Mr. Thumble, hardly knowing what he was about, followed the woman into the bedroom, and there he found himself standing awestruck before the corpse of her who had so lately been the presiding spirit of the palace.

The body was still resting on its legs, leaning against the end of the side of the bed, while one of the arms was close clasped round the bed-post. The mouth was rigidly closed, but the eyes were open as though staring at him. Nevertheless there could be no doubt from the first glance that the woman was dead. He went up close to it, but did not dare to touch it. There was no one as yet there but he and Mrs. Draper;—no one else knew what had happened.

"It 's her heart," said Mrs. Draper.

"Did she suffer from heart-complaint?" he asked.

"We suspected it, sir, though nobody knew it. She was very shy of talking about herself."

"We must send for the doctor at once," said Mr. Thumble. "We had better touch nothing till he is here." Then they retreated and the door was locked.

In ten minutes everybody in the house knew it except the bishop; and in twenty minutes the nearest apothecary with his assistant were in the room, and the body had been properly laid upon the bed. Even then the husband had not been told,—did not know either his relief or his loss. It was now past seven, which was the usual hour for dinner at the palace, and

it was probable that he would come out of his room among the servants, if he were not summoned. When it was proposed to Mr. Thumble that he should go in to him and tell him, he positively declined, saying that the sight which he had just seen and the exertions of the day together, had so unnerved him, that he had not physical strength for the task. The apothecary, who had been summoned in a hurry, had escaped, probably being equally unwilling to be the bearer of such a communication. The duty therefore fell to Mrs. Draper, and under the pressing instance of the other servants she descended to her master's room. Had it not been that the hour of dinner had come, so that the bishop could not have been left much longer to himself, the evil time would have been still postponed.

She went very slowly along the passage, and was just going to pause ere she reached the room, when the door was opened and the bishop stood close before her. It was easy to be seen that he was cross. His hands and face were unwashed, and his face was haggard. In these days he would not even go through the ceremony of dressing himself before dinner. "Mrs. Draper," he said, "why don't they tell me that dinner is ready? Are they going to give me any dinner?" She stood a moment without answering him, while the tears streamed down her face. "What is the matter?" said he. "Has your mistress sent you here?"

"Oh, laws!" said Mrs. Draper,—and she put out her hands to support him if such support should be necessary.

"What is the matter?" he demanded angrily.

"Oh, my lord;—bear it like a Christian. Mistress is n't no more." He leaned back against the door-post, and she took hold of him by the arm. "It was the heart, my lord. Dr. Fillgrave hisself has not been yet; but that 's what it was." The bishop did not say a word, but walked back to his chair before the fire.

CHAPTER XII.

IN MEMORIAM.

THE bishop when he had heard the tidings of his wife's death walked back to his seat over the fire, and Mrs. Draper, the housekeeper, came and stood over him without speaking. Thus she stood for ten minutes looking down at him and listening. But there was no sound; not a word, nor a moan, nor a sob. It was as though he also were dead, but that a slight irregular movement of his fingers on the top of his bald head, told her that his mind and body were still active. "My lord," she said at last, "would you wish to see the doctor when he comes?" She spoke very low and he did not answer her. Then, after another minute of silence, she asked the same question again.

"What doctor?" he said.

"Dr. Fillgrave. We sent for him. Perhaps he is here now. Shall I go and see, my lord?" Mrs. Draper found that her position there was weary and she wished to escape. Anything on his behalf requiring trouble or work she would have done willingly; but she could not stand there forever watching the motion of his fingers.

"I suppose I must see him," said the bishop. Mrs. Draper took this as an order for her departure, and crept silently out of the room, closing the door behind her with the long protracted elaborate click which is always produced by an attempt at silence on such

occasions. He did not care for noise or for silence. Had she slammed the door he would not have regarded it. A wonderful silence had come upon him which for the time almost crushed him. He would never hear that well-known voice again!

He was free now. Even in his misery,—for he was very miserable,—he could not refrain from telling himself that. No one could now press uncalled-for into his study, contradict him in the presence of those before whom he was bound to be authoritative, and rob him of all his dignity. There was no one else of whom he was afraid. She had at least kept him out of the hands of other tyrants. He was now his own master, and there was a feeling,—I may not call it of relief, for as yet there was more of pain in it than of satisfaction,—a feeling as though he had escaped from an old trouble at a terrible cost of which he could not as yet calculate the amount. He knew that he might now give up all idea of writing to the archbishop.

She had in some ways, and at certain periods of his life, been very good to him. She had kept his money for him and made things go straight, when they had been poor. His interests had always been her interests. Without her he would never have been a bishop. So, at least, he told himself now, and so told himself probably with truth. She had been very careful of his children. She had never been idle. She had never been fond of pleasure. She had neglected no acknowledged duty. He did not doubt that she was now on her way to heaven. He took his hands down from his head, and clasping them together, said a little prayer. It may be doubted whether he quite knew for what he was praying. The idea of praying for her soul, now

that she was dead, would have scandalised him. He certainly was not praying for his own soul. I think he was praying that God might save him from being glad that his wife was dead.

But she was dead;—and, as it were, in a moment! He had not stirred out of that room since she had been there with him. Then there had been angry words between them,—perhaps more determined enmity on his part than ever had before existed; and they had parted for the last time with bitter animosity. But he told himself that he had certainly been right in what he had done then. He thought he had been right then. And so his mind went back to the Crawley and Thumble question, and he tried to alleviate the misery which that last interview with his wife now created by assuring himself that he at least had been justified in what he had done.

But yet his thoughts were very tender to her. Nothing reopens the springs of love so fully as absence, and no absence so thoroughly as that which must needs be endless. We want that which we have not; and especially that which we can never have. She had told him in the very last moments of her presence with him that he was wishing that she were dead, and he had made her no reply. At the moment he had felt, with savage anger, that such was his wish. Her words had now come to pass, and he was a widower,—and he assured himself that he would give all he possessed in the world to bring her back again.

Yes; he was a widower, and he might do as he pleased. The tyrant was gone, and he was free. The tyrant was gone, and the tyranny had doubtless been very oppressive. Who had suffered as he had done?

But in thus being left without his tyrant he was wretchedly desolate. Might it not be that the tyranny had been good for him?—that the Lord had known best what wife was fit for him? Then he thought of a story which he had read,—and had well marked as he was reading,—of some man who had been terribly afflicted by his wife, whose wife had starved him and beaten him and reviled him; and yet this man had been able to thank his God for having thus mortified him in the flesh. Might it not be that the mortification which he himself had doubtless suffered in his flesh had been intended for his welfare, and had been very good for him? But if this were so, it might be that the mortification was now removed because the Lord knew that His servant had been sufficiently mortified. He had not been starved or beaten, but the mortification had been certainly severe. Then there came words—into his mind, not into his mouth—"The Lord sent the thorn, and the Lord has taken it away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." After that he was very angry with himself, and tried to pray that he might be forgiven. While he was so striving there came a low knock at the door, and Mrs. Draper again entered the room.

"Dr. Fillgrave, my lord, was not at home," said Mrs. Draper; "but he will be sent the very moment he arrives."

"Very well, Mrs. Draper."

"But, my lord, will you not come to your dinner? A little soup, or a morsel of something to eat, and a glass of wine, will enable your lordship to bear it better." He allowed Mrs. Draper to persuade him, and followed her into the dining-room. "Do not go, Mrs.

Draper," he said; "I would rather that you should stay with me." So Mrs. Draper stayed with him, and administered to his wants. He was desirous of being seen by as few eyes as possible in these first moments of his freedom.

He saw Dr. Fillgrave twice, both before and after the doctor had been upstairs. There was no doubt, Dr. Fillgrave said, that it was as Mrs. Draper had surmised. The poor lady was suffering, and had for years been suffering, from heart-complaint. To her husband she had never said a word on the subject. To Mrs. Draper a word had been said now and again, —a word when some moment of fear would come, when some sharp stroke of agony would tell of danger. But Mrs. Draper had kept the secret of her mistress, and none of the family had known that there was aught to be feared. Dr. Fillgrave, indeed, did tell the bishop that he had dreaded all along exactly that which had happened. He had said the same to Mr. Rerechild, the surgeon, when they two had had a consultation together at the palace on the occasion of a somewhat alarming birth of a grandchild. But he mixed up this information with so much medical Latin, and was so pompous over it, and the bishop was so anxious to be rid of him, that his words did not have much effect. What did it all matter? The thorn was gone, and the wife was dead, and the widower must balance his gain and loss as best he might.

He slept well, but when he woke in the morning the dreariness of his loneliness was very strong on him. He must do something, and must see somebody, but he felt that he did not know how to bear himself in his new position. He must send, of course, for his

chaplain, and tell his chaplain to open all letters and to answer them for a week. Then he remembered how many of his letters in days of yore had been opened and been answered by the helpmate who had just gone from him. Since Dr. Tempest's visit he had insisted that the palace letter-bag should always be brought in the first instance to him;—and this had been done, greatly to the annoyance of his wife. In order that it might be done the bishop had been up every morning an hour before his usual time; and everybody in the household had known why it was so. He thought of this now as the bag was brought to him on the first morning of his freedom. He could have it where he pleased now;—either in his bedroom or left for him untouched on the breakfast table till he should go to it. "Blessed be the name of the Lord," he said as he thought of all this; but he did not stop to analyse what he was saying. On this morning he would not enjoy his liberty, but desired that the letter-bag might be taken to Mr. Snapper, the chaplain.

The news of Mrs. Proudie's death had spread all over Barchester on the evening of its occurrence, and had been received with that feeling of distant awe which is always accompanied by some degree of pleasurable sensation. There was no one in Barchester to lament a mother, or a sister, or a friend who was really loved. There were those, doubtless, who regretted the woman's death,—and even some who regretted it without any feeling of personal damage done to themselves. There had come to be around Mrs. Proudie a party who thought as she thought on church matters, and such people had lost their head, and thereby their strength. And she had been staunch to

her own party, preferring bad tea from a low-church grocer, to good tea from a grocer who went to the ritualistic church or to no church at all. And it is due to her to say that she did not forget those who were true to her,—looking after them mindfully where looking after might be profitable, and fighting their battles where fighting might be more serviceable. I do not think that the appetite for breakfast of any man or woman in Barchester was disturbed by the news of Mrs. Proudie's death, but there were some who felt that a trouble had fallen on them.

Tidings of the catastrophe reached Hiram's Hospital on the evening of its occurrence,—Hiram's Hospital, where dwelt Mr. and Mrs. Quiverful with all their children. Now Mrs. Quiverful owed a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Proudie, having been placed in her present comfortable home by that lady's patronage. Mrs. Quiverful perhaps understood the character of the deceased woman, and expressed her opinion respecting it, as graphically as did any one in Barchester. There was the natural surprise felt at the warden's lodge in the hospital when the tidings were first received there, and the Quiverful family was at first too full of dismay, regrets, and surmises, to be able to give themselves impartially to criticism. But on the following morning, conversation at the breakfast table naturally referring to the great loss which the bishop had sustained, Mrs. Quiverful thus pronounced her opinion of her friend's character: "You 'll find that he 'll feel it, Q.," she said to her husband, in answer to some sarcastic remark made by him as to the removal of the thorn. "He 'll feel it, though she was almost too many for him while she was alive."

"I dare say he 'll feel it at first," said Quiverful; "but I think he 'll be more comfortable than he has been."

"Of course he 'll feel it, and go on feeling it till he dies, if he 's the man I take him to be. You 're not to think that there has been no love because there used to be some words, or that he 'll find himself the happier because he can do things more as he pleases. She was a great help to him, and he must have known that she was, in spite of the sharpness of her tongue. No doubt she was sharp. No doubt she was upsetting. And she could make herself a fool too in her struggles to have everything her own way. But, Q., there were worse women than Mrs. Proudie. She was never one of your idle ones, and I 'm quite sure that no man or woman ever heard her say a word against her husband behind his back."

"All the same, she gave him a terribly bad life of it, if all is true that we hear."

"There are men who must have what you call a terribly bad life of it, whatever way it goes with them. The bishop is weak, and he wants somebody near to him to be strong. She was strong,—perhaps too strong; but he had his advantage out of it. After all I don't know that his life has been so terribly bad. I dare say he 's had everything very comfortable about him. And a man ought to be grateful for that, though very few men ever are."

Mr. Quiverful's predecessor at the hospital, old Mr. Harding, whose halcyon days in Barchester had been passed before the coming of the Proudies, was in bed playing cat's-cradle with Posy seated on the counterpane, when the tidings of Mrs. Proudie's death were

brought to him by Mrs. Baxter. "Oh, sir," said Mrs. Baxter, seating herself on a chair by the bedside. Mr. Harding liked Mrs. Baxter to sit down, because he was almost sure on such occasions to have the advantage of a prolonged conversation.

"What is it, Mrs. Baxter?"

"Oh, sir!"

"Is anything the matter?" And the old man attempted to raise himself in his bed.

"You must n't frighten grandpa," said Posy.

"No, my dear; and there is n't nothing to frighten him. There is n't indeed, Mr. Harding. They 're all well at Plumstead, and when I heard from the missus at Venice, everything was going on well."

"But what is it, Mrs. Baxter?"

"God forgive her all her sins—Mrs. Proudie ain't no more." Now there had been terrible feud between the palace and the deanery for years, in carrying on which the persons of the opposed households were wont to express themselves with eager animosity. Mrs. Baxter and Mrs. Draper never spoke to each other. The two coachmen each longed for an opportunity to take the other before a magistrate for some breach of the law of the road in driving. The footmen abused each other, and the grooms occasionally fought. The masters and mistresses contented themselves with simple hatred. Therefore it was not surprising that Mrs. Baxter, in speaking of the death of Mrs. Proudie, should remember first her sins.

"Mrs. Proudie dead!" said the old man.

"Indeed she is, Mr. Harding," said Mrs. Baxter, putting both her hands together piously. "We 're just grass, ain't we, sir, and dust and clay and flowers of

the field?" Whether Mrs. Proudie had most partaken of the clayey nature, or of the flowery nature, Mrs. Baxter did not stop to consider.

"Mrs. Proudie dead!" said Posy, with a solemnity that was all her own. "Then she won't scold the poor bishop any more."

"No, my dear; she won't scold anybody any more; and it will be a blessing for some, I must say. Everybody is always so considerate in this house, Miss Posy, that we none of us know nothing about what that is."

"Dead!" said Mr. Harding again. "I think, if you please, Mrs. Baxter, you shall leave me for a little time, and take Miss Posy with you." He had been in the city of Barchester some fifty years, and here was one who might have been his daughter, who had come there scarcely ten years since, and who now had gone before him! He had never loved Mrs. Proudie. Perhaps he had gone as near to disliking Mrs. Proudie as he had ever gone to disliking any person. Mrs. Proudie had wounded him in every part that was most sensitive. It would be long to tell, nor need it be told now, how she had ridiculed his cathedral work, how she had made nothing of him, how she had despised him, always manifesting her contempt plainly. He had been even driven to rebuke her, and it had perhaps been the only personal rebuke which he had ever uttered in Barchester. But now she was gone; and he thought of her simply as an active pious woman, who had been taken away from her work before her time. And for the bishop, no idea ever entered Mr. Harding's mind as to the removal of a thorn. The man had lost his life's companion at that time of life

when such a companion is most needed; and Mr. Harding grieved for him with sincerity.

The news went out to Plumstead Episcopi by the postman, and happened to reach the archdeacon as he was talking to his curate at the little gate leading into the churchyard. "Mrs. Proudie dead!" he almost shouted, as the postman notified the fact to him. "Impossible!"

"It be so for zartain, yer reverence," said the postman, who was proud of his news.

"Heavens!" ejaculated the archdeacon, and then hurried in to his wife. "My dear," he said—and as he spoke he could hardly deliver himself of his words, so eager was he to speak them—"who do you think is dead? Gracious heavens! Mrs. Proudie is dead!" Mrs. Grantly dropped from her hand the teaspoonful of tea that was just going into the pot, and repeated her husband's words. "Mrs. Proudie dead!" There was a pause, during which they looked into each other's faces. "My dear, I don't believe it," said Mrs. Grantly.

But she did believe it very shortly. There were no prayers at Plumstead rectory that morning. The archdeacon immediately went out into the village, and soon obtained sufficient evidence of the truth of that which the postman had told him. Then he rushed back to his wife. "It 's true," he said. "It 's quite true. She 's dead. There 's no doubt about that. She 's dead. It was last night about seven. That was when they found her, at least, and she may have died about an hour before. Fillgrave says not more than an hour."

"And how did she die?"

"Heart-complaint. She was standing up, taking hold of the bedstead, and so they found her." Then there was a pause, during which the archdeacon sat down to his breakfast. "I wonder how he felt when he heard it?"

"Of course he was terribly shocked."

"I 've no doubt he was shocked. Any man would be shocked. But when you come to think of it, what a relief!"

"How can you speak of it in that way?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"How am I to speak of it in any other way?" said the archdeacon. "Of course I should n't go and say it out in the street."

"I don't think you ought to say it anywhere," said Mrs. Grantly. "The poor man no doubt feels about his wife in the same way that anybody else would."

"And if any other poor man has got such a wife as she was, you may be quite sure that he would be glad to be rid of her. I don't say that he wished her to die, or that he would have done anything to contrive her death——"

"Gracious, archdeacon; do, pray, hold your tongue."

"But it stands to reason that her going will be a great relief to him. What has she done for him? She has made him contemptible to everybody in the diocese by her interference, and his life has been a burden to him through her violence."

"Is that the way you carry out your proverb of De mortuis?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"The proverb of De mortuis is founded on humbug. Humbug out-of-doors is necessary. It would not do for you and me to go into the High Street just now

and say what we think about Mrs. Proudie; but I don't suppose that kind of thing need be kept up in here, between you and me. She was an uncomfortable woman,—so uncomfortable that I cannot believe that any one will regret her. Dear me! Only to think that she has gone! You may as well give me my tea."

I do not think that Mrs. Grantly's opinion differed much from that expressed by her husband, or that she was, in truth, the least offended by the archdeacon's plain speech. But it must be remembered that there was probably no house in the diocese in which Mrs. Proudie had been so thoroughly hated as she had been at the Plumstead rectory. There had been hatred at the deanery; but the hatred at the deanery had been mild in comparison with the hatred at Plumstead. The archdeacon was a sound friend; but he was also a sound enemy. From the very first arrival of the Proudies at Barchester, Mrs. Proudie had thrown down her gauntlet to him, and he had not been slow in picking it up. The war had been internecine, and each had given the other terrible wounds. It had been understood that there should be no quarter, and there had been none. His enemy was now dead, and the archdeacon could not bring himself to adopt before his wife the namby-pamby everyday decency of speaking well of one of whom he had ever thought ill, or of expressing regret when no regret could be felt. "May all her sins be forgiven her," said Mrs. Grantly. "Amen," said the archdeacon. There was something in the tone of his Amen which thoroughly implied that it was uttered only on the understanding that her departure from the existing world was to be regarded as an un-

mitigated good, and that she should, at any rate, never come back again to Barchester.

When Lady Lufton heard the tidings, she was not so bold in speaking of it as was her friend the archdeacon. "Mrs. Proudie dead!" she said to her daughter-in-law. This was some hours after the news had reached the house, and when the fact of the poor lady's death had been fully recognised. "What will he do without her?"

"The same as other men do," said young Lady Lufton.

"But, my dear, he is not the same as other men. He is not at all like other men. He is so weak that he cannot walk without a stick to lean upon. No doubt she was a virago, a woman who could not control her temper for a moment! No doubt she had led him a terrible life! I have often pitied him with all my heart. But, nevertheless, she was useful to him. I suppose she was useful to him. I can hardly believe that Mrs. Proudie is dead. Had he gone it would have seemed so much more natural. Poor woman! I dare say she had her good points." The reader will be pleased to remember that the Luftons had ever been strong partisans on the side of the Grantlys.

The news made its way even to Hogglestock on the same day. Mrs. Crawley, when she heard it, went out after her husband, who was in the school. "Dead!" said he, in answer to her whisper. "Do you tell me that the woman is dead?" Then Mrs. Crawley explained that the tidings were credible. "May God forgive her all her sins," said Mr. Crawley. "She was a violent woman, certainly, and I think that she misunderstood her duties; but I do not say that she was

a bad woman. I am inclined to think that she was earnest in her endeavours to do good." It never occurred to Mr. Crawley that he and his affair had, in truth, been the cause of her death.

It was thus that she was spoken of for a few days; and then men and women ceased to speak much of her, and began to talk of the bishop instead. A month had not passed before it was surmised that a man so long accustomed to the comforts of married life would marry again; and even then one lady connected with low-church clergymen in and around the city was named as a probable successor to the great lady who was gone. For myself, I am inclined to think that the bishop will for the future be content to lean upon his chaplain.

The monument that was put up to our old friend's memory in one of the side aisles of the choir of the cathedral was supposed to be designed and executed in good taste. There was a broken column, and on the column simply the words, "My beloved wife!" Then there was a slab by the column, bearing Mrs. Proudie's name, with the date of her life and death. Beneath this was the common inscription,—

"*Requiescat in pace.*"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OBSTINACY OF MR. CRAWLEY.

Dr. Tempest, when he heard the news, sent immediately to Mr. Robarts, begging him to come over to Silverbridge. But this message was not occasioned solely by the death of Mrs. Proudie. Dr. Tempest had also heard that Mr. Crawley had submitted himself to the bishop, that instant advantage,—and, as Dr. Tempest thought, unfair advantage,—had been taken of Mr. Crawley's submission, and that the pernicious Thumble had been at once sent over to Hogglestock. Had these palace doings with reference to Mr. Crawley been unaccompanied by the catastrophe which had happened, the doctor, much as he might have regretted them, would probably have felt that there was nothing to be done. He could not in such case have prevented Thumble's journey to Hogglestock on the next Sunday, and certainly he could not have softened the heart of the presiding genius at the palace. But things were very different now. The presiding genius was gone. Everybody at the palace would for a while be weak and vacillating. Thumble would be then thoroughly cowed; and it might at any rate be possible to make some movement in Mr. Crawley's favour. Dr. Tempest, therefore, sent for Mr. Robarts.

"I 'm giving you a great deal of trouble, Robarts,"

said the doctor; "but then you are so much younger than I am, and I 've an idea that you would do more for this poor man than any one else in the diocese." Mr. Robarts of course declared that he did not begrudge his trouble, and that he would do anything in his power for the poor man. "I think that you should see him again, and that you should then see Thumble also. I don't know whether you can condescend to be civil to Thumble. I could not."

"I am not quite sure that incivility would not be more efficacious," said Mr. Robarts.

"Very likely. There are men who are deaf as adders to courtesy, but who are compelled to obedience at once by ill-usage. Very likely Thumble is one of them; but of that you will be the best judge yourself. I would see Crawley first, and get his consent."

"That 's the difficulty."

"Then I should go on without his consent, and I would see Thumble and the bishop's chaplain, Snapper. I think you might manage just at this moment, when they will all be a little abashed and perplexed by this woman's death, to arrange that simply nothing shall be done. The great thing will be that Crawley should go on with the duty till the assizes. If it should then happen that he goes into Barchester, is acquitted, and comes back again, the whole thing will be over, and there will be no further interference in the parish. If I were you, I think I would try it." Mr. Robarts said that he would try it. "I dare say Mr. Crawley will be a little stiff-necked with you."

"He will be very stiff-necked with me," said Mr. Robarts.

"But I can hardly think that he will throw away the

only means he has of supporting his wife and children, when he finds that there can be no occasion for his doing so. I do not suppose that any person wishes him to throw up his work now that that poor woman has gone."

Mr. Crawley had been almost in good spirits since the last visit which Mr. Thumble had made to him. It seemed as though the loss of everything in the world was in some way satisfactory to him. He had now given up his living by his own doing, and had after a fashion acknowledged his guilt by this act. He had proclaimed to all around him that he did not think himself to be any longer fit to perform the sacred functions of his office. He spoke of his trial as though a verdict against him must be the result. He knew that in going into prison he would leave his wife and children dependent on the charity of their friends,—on charity which they must condescend to accept, though he could not condescend to ask it. And yet he was able to carry himself now with a greater show of fortitude than had been within his power when the extent of his calamity was more doubtful. I must not ask the reader to suppose that he was cheerful. To have been cheerful under such circumstances would have been inhuman. But he carried his head on high, and walked firmly, and gave his orders at home with a clear voice. His wife, who was necessarily more despondent than ever, wondered at him,—but wondered in silence. It certainly seemed as though the very extremity of ill-fortune was good for him. And he was very diligent with his school, passing the greater part of the morning with the children. Mr. Thumble had told him that he would come on Sunday, and that he would

then take charge of the parish. Up to the coming of Mr. Thumble he would do everything in the parish that could be done by a clergyman with a clear spirit and a free heart. Mr. Thumble should not find that spiritual weeds had grown rank in the parish because of his misfortunes.

Mrs. Proudie had died on the Tuesday,—that having been the day of Mr. Thumble's visit to Hogglestock,—and Mr. Robarts had gone over to Silverbridge, in answer to Dr. Tempest's invitation, on the Thursday. He had not, therefore, the command of much time, it being his express object to prevent the appearance of Mr. Thumble at Hogglestock on the next Sunday. He had gone to Silverbridge by railway, and had, therefore, been obliged to postpone his visit to Mr. Crawley till the next day; but early on the Friday morning he rode over to Hogglestock. That he did not arrive there with a broken-kneed horse, the reader may be quite sure. In all matters of that sort Mr. Robarts was ever above reproach. He rode a good horse, and drove a neat gig, and was always well dressed. On this account Mr. Crawley, though he really liked Mr. Robarts, and was thankful to him for many kindnesses, could never bear his presence with perfect equanimity. Robarts was no scholar, was not a great preacher, had obtained no celebrity as a churchman,—had, in fact, done nothing to merit great reward; and yet everything had been given to him with an abundant hand. Within the last twelvemonth his wife had inherited Mr. Crawley did not care to know how many thousand pounds. And yet Mr. Robarts had won all that he possessed by being a clergyman. Was it possible that Mr. Crawley should regard such a man with equanimity? Robarts

rode over with a groom behind him,—really taking the groom because he knew that Mr. Crawley would have no one to hold his horse for him;—and the groom was the source of great offence. He came upon Mr. Crawley standing at the school door, and stopping at once, jumped off his nag. There was something in the way in which he sprang out of the saddle and threw the reins to the man, which was not clerical in Mr. Crawley's eyes. No man could be so quick in the matter of a horse who spent as many hours with the poor and with the children as should be spent by a parish clergyman. It might be probable that Mr. Robarts had never stolen twenty pounds,—might never be accused of so disgraceful a crime,—but, nevertheless, Mr. Crawley had his own ideas, and made his own comparisons.

"Crawley," said Robarts, "I am so glad to find you at home."

"I am generally to be found in the parish," said the perpetual curate of Hogglestock.

"I know you are," said Robarts, who knew the man well, and cared nothing for his friend's peculiarities when he felt his own withers to be unwrung. "But you might have been down at Hoggle End with the brickmakers, and then I should have had to go after you."

"I should have grieved——" began Crawley; but Robarts interrupted him at once.

"Let us go for a walk, and I 'll leave the man with the horses. I 've something special to say to you, and I can say it better out here than in the house. Grace is quite well, and sends her love. She is growing to look so beautiful!"

"I hope she may grow in grace with God," said Mr. Crawley.

"She 's as good a girl as I ever knew. By-the-bye, you had Henry Grantly over here the other day?"

"Major Grantly, whom I cannot name without expressing my esteem for him, did do us the honour of calling upon us not very long since. If it be with reference to him that you have taken this trouble——"

"No, no; not at all. I 'll allow him and the ladies to fight out that battle. I 've not the least doubt in the world how that will go. When I 'm told that she made a complete conquest of the archdeacon there cannot be a doubt about that."

"A conquest of the archdeacon!"

But Mr. Robarts did not wish to have to explain anything further about the archdeacon. "Were you not terribly shocked, Crawley," he asked, "when you heard of the death of Mrs. Proudie?"

"It was sudden and very awful," said Mr. Crawley. "Such deaths are always shocking. Not more so, perhaps, as regards the wife of a bishop, than with any other woman."

"Only we happened to know her."

"No doubt the finite and meagre nature of our feelings does prevent us from extending our sympathies to those whom we have not seen in the flesh. It should not be so, and would not with one who had nurtured his heart with proper care. And we are prone to permit an evil worse than that to canker our regards and to foster and to mar our solicitudes. Those who are high in station strike us more by their joys and sorrows than do the poor and lowly. Were some

young duke's wife, wedded but the other day, to die, all England would put on some show of mourning,—nay, would feel some true gleam of pity; but nobody cares for the widowed brickmaker seated with his starving infant on his cold hearth."

"Of course we hear more of the big people," said Robarts.

"Ay; and think more of them. But do not suppose, sir, that I complain of this man or that woman because his sympathies, or hers, run out of that course which my reason tells me they should hold. The man with whom it would not be so would simply be a god among men. It is in his perfection as a man that we recognise the Divinity of Christ. It is in the imperfection of men that we recognise our necessity for a Christ. Yes, sir, the death of the poor lady at Barchester was very sudden. I hope that my lord the bishop bears with becoming fortitude the heavy misfortune. They say that he was a man much beholden to his wife,—prone to lean upon her in his goings out and comings in. For such a man such a loss is more dreadful perhaps than for another."

"They say she led him a terrible life, you know."

"I am not prone, sir, to believe much of what I hear about the domesticities of other men, knowing how little any other man can know of my own. And I have, methinks, observed a proneness in the world to ridicule that dependence on a woman which every married man should acknowledge in regard to the wife of his bosom, if he can trust her as well as love her. When I hear jocose proverbs spoken as to men, such as that in this house the grey mare is the better horse, or that in that house the wife wears that garment which

is supposed to denote virile command, knowing that the joke is easy, and that meekness in a man is more truly noble than a habit of stern authority, I do not allow them to go far with me in influencing my judgment."

So spoke Mr. Crawley, who never permitted the slightest interference with his own word in his own family, and who had himself been a witness of one of those scenes between the bishop and his wife in which the poor bishop had been so cruelly misused. But to Mr. Crawley the thing which he himself had seen under such circumstances was as sacred as though it had come to him under the seal of confession. In speaking of the bishop and Mrs. Proudie,—nay, as far as was possible in thinking of them,—he was bound to speak and to think as though he had not witnessed that scene in the palace study.

"I don't suppose that there is much doubt about her real character," said Robarts. "But you and I need not discuss that."

"By no means. Such discussion would be both useless and unseemly."

"And just at present here is something else that I specially want to say to you. Indeed, I went to Silverbridge on the same subject yesterday, and have come here expressly to have a little conversation with you."

"If it be about affairs of mine, Mr. Robarts, I am indeed troubled in spirit that so great labour should have fallen upon you."

"Never mind my labour. Indeed, I resent your saying that it is a nuisance to me, because I hoped that by this time you would have understood that I regard you as a friend, and that I think nothing any trouble

that I do for a friend. Your position just now is so peculiar that it requires a great deal of care."

"No care can be of any avail to me."

"There I disagree with you. You must excuse me, but I do; and so does Dr. Tempest. We think that you have been a little too much in a hurry since he communicated to you the result of our first meeting."

"As how, sir?"

"It is, perhaps, hardly worth while for us to go into the whole question; but that man, Thumble, must not come here on next Sunday."

"I cannot say, Mr. Robarts, that the Reverend Mr. Thumble has recommended himself to me strongly either by his outward symbols of manhood or by such manifestation of his inward mental gifts as I have succeeded in obtaining. But my knowledge of him has been so slight, and has been acquired in a manner so likely to bias me prejudicially against him, that I am inclined to think my opinion should go for nothing. It is, however, the fact that the bishop has nominated him to this duty; and that, as I have myself simply notified my desire to be relieved from the care of the parish, on account of certain unfitness of my own, I am the last man who should interfere with the bishop in the choice of my temporary successor."

"It was her choice, not his."

"Excuse me, Mr. Robarts, but I cannot allow that assertion to pass unquestioned. I must say that I have adequate cause for believing that he came here by his lordship's authority."

"No doubt he did. Will you just listen to me for a moment? Ever since this unfortunate affair of the cheque became known Mrs. Proudie has been anxious

to get you out of this parish. She was a violent woman, and chose to take this matter up violently. Pray hear me out before you interrupt me. There would have been no commission at all but for her."

"The commission is right and proper and just," said Mr. Crawley, who could not keep himself silent.

"Very well. Let it be so. But Mr. Thumble's coming over here is not proper or right; and you may be sure the bishop does not wish it."

"Let him send any other clergyman whom he may think more fitting," said Mr. Crawley.

"But we do not want him to send anybody."

"Somebody must be sent, Mr. Robarts."

"No, not so. Let me go over and see Thumble and Snapper,—Snapper, you know, is the domestic chaplain; and all that you need do is to go on with your services on Sunday. If necessary, I will see the bishop. I think you may be sure that I can manage it. If not, I will come back to you." Mr. Robarts paused for an answer, but it seemed for a while that all Mr. Crawley's impatient desire to speak was over. He walked on silently along the lane by his visitor's side, and when, after some five or six minutes, Robarts stood still in the road, Mr. Crawley even then said nothing. "It cannot be but that you should be anxious to keep the income of the parish for your wife and children," said Mark Robarts.

"Of course I am anxious for my wife and children," Crawley answered.

"Then let me do as I say. Why should you throw away a chance, even if it be a bad one? But here the chance is all in your favour. Let me manage it for you at Barchester."

"Of course I am anxious for my wife and children," said Crawley, repeating his words; "how anxious, I fancy no man can conceive who has not been near enough to absolute want to know how terrible is its approach when it threatens those who are weak and who are very dear! But, Mr. Robarts, you spoke just now of the chance of the thing,—the chance of your arranging on my behalf that I should for a while longer be left in the enjoyment of the freehold of my parish. It seemeth to me that there should be no chance on such a subject; that in the adjustment of so momentous a matter there should be a consideration of right and wrong, and no consideration of aught beside. I have been growing to feel, for some weeks past, that circumstances,—whether through my own fault or not is an outside question as to which I will not further delay you by offering even an opinion,—that unfortunate circumstances have made me unfit to remain here as guardian of the souls of the people of this parish. Then there came to me the letter from Dr. Tempest,—for which I am greatly beholden to him,—strengthening me altogether in this view. What could I do then, Mr. Robarts? Could I allow myself to think of my wife and my children, when such a question as that was before me for self-discussion?"

"I would,—certainly," said Robarts.

"No, sir! Excuse the bluntness of my contradiction, but I feel assured that in such emergency you would look solely to duty,—as, by God's help, I will endeavour to do. Mr. Robarts, there are many of us who, in many things, are much worse than we believe ourselves to be. But in other matters, and perhaps of larger moment, we can rise to ideas of duty as the

need for such ideas comes upon us. I say not this at all as praising myself. I speak of men as I believe that they will be found to be;—of yourself, of myself, and of others who strive to live with clean hands and a clear conscience. I do not for a moment think that you would retain your benefice at Framley if there had come upon you, after much thought, an assured conviction that you could not retain it without grievous injury to the souls of others and grievous sin to your own. Wife and children, dear as they are to you and to me,—as dear to me as to you,—fade from the sight when the time comes for judgment on such a matter as that!" They were standing quite still now, facing each other, and Crawley, as he spoke with a low voice, looked straight into his friend's eyes, and kept his hand firmly fixed on his friend's arm.

"I cannot interfere further," said Robarts.

"No,—you cannot interfere further." Robarts, when he told the story of the interview to his wife that evening, declared that he had never heard a voice so plaintively touching as was the voice of Mr. Crawley when he uttered those last words.

They returned back to the servant and the house almost without a word, and Robarts mounted without offering to see Mrs. Crawley. Nor did Mr. Crawley ask him to do so. It was better now that Robarts should go. "May God send you through all your troubles," said Mr. Robarts.

"Mr. Robarts, I thank you warmly for your friendship," said Mr. Crawley. And then they parted. In about half-an-hour Mr. Crawley returned to the house. "Now for Pindar, Jane," he said, seating himself at his old desk.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. CRAWLEY'S LAST APPEARANCE IN HIS OWN PULPIT.

No word or message from Mr. Crawley reached Barchester throughout the week, and on the Sunday morning Mr. Thumble was under a positive engagement to go out to Hogglestock, and perform the services of the church. Dr. Tempest had been quite right in saying that Mr. Thumble would be awed by the death of his patroness. Such was altogether the case, and he was very anxious to escape from the task he had undertaken at her instance, if it were possible. In the first place, he had never been a favourite with the bishop himself, and had now, therefore, nothing to expect in the diocese. The crusts from bits of loaves and the morsels of broken fishes which had come in his way had all come from the bounty of Mrs. Proudie. And then, as regarded this special Hogglestock job, how was he to get paid for it? Whence, indeed, was he to seek repayment for the actual money which he would be out of pocket in finding his way to Hogglestock and back again? But he could not get to speak to the bishop, nor could he induce any one who had access to his lordship to touch upon the subject. Mr. Snapper avoided him as much as possible; and Mr. Snapper, when he was caught and interrogated, de-

clared that he regarded the matter as settled. Nothing could be in worse taste, Mr. Snapper thought, than to undo, immediately after the poor lady's death, work in the diocese which had been arranged and done by her. Mr. Snapper expressed his opinion that Mr. Thumble was bound to go out to Hogglestock; and, when Mr. Thumble declared petulantly that he would not stir a step out of Barchester, Mr. Snapper protested that Mr. Thumble would have to answer for it in this world and in the next if there were no services at Hogglestock on that Sunday. On the Saturday evening Mr. Thumble made a desperate attempt to see the bishop, but was told by Mrs. Draper that the bishop had positively declined to see him. The bishop himself probably felt unwilling to interfere with his wife's doings so soon after her death! So Mr. Thumble, with a heavy heart, went across to the Dragon of Wantly, and ordered a gig, resolving that the bill should be sent in to the palace. He was not going to trust himself again upon the bishop's cob!

Up to Saturday evening Mr. Crawley did the work of his parish, and on the Saturday evening he made an address to his parishioners from his pulpit. He had given notice among the brickmakers and labourers that he wished to say a few words to them in the schoolroom; but the farmers also heard of this and came with their wives and daughters, and all the brickmakers came, and most of the labourers were there, so that there was no room for them in the schoolhouse. The congregation was much larger than was customary even in the church. "They will come," he said to his wife, "to hear a ruined man declare his own ruin, but they will not come to hear the Word of God." When

it was found that the persons assembled were too many for the schoolroom, the meeting was adjourned to the church, and Mr. Crawley was forced to get into his pulpit. He said a short prayer, and then he began his story.

His story as he told it then shall not be repeated now, as the same story has been told too often already in these pages. Surely it was a singular story for a parish clergyman to tell of himself in so solemn a manner. That he had applied the cheque to his own purposes, and was unable to account for the possession of it, was certain. He did not know when or how he had got it. Speaking to them then in God's house he told them that. He was to be tried by a jury, and all he could do was to tell the jury the same. He would not expect the jury to believe him. The jury would, of course, believe only that which was proved to them. But he did expect his old friends at Hogglestock, who had known him so long, to take his word as true. That there was no sufficient excuse for his conduct, even in his own sight, this, his voluntary resignation of his parish, was, he said, sufficient evidence. Then he explained to them, as clearly as he was able, what the bishop had done, what the commission had done, and what he had done himself. That he spoke no word of Mrs. Proudie to that audience need hardly be mentioned here. "And now, dearest friends, I leave you," he said, with that weighty solemnity which was so peculiar to the man, and which he was able to make singularly impressive even on such a congregation as that of Hogglestock, "and I trust that the heavy but pleasing burden of the charge which I have had over you may fall into hands better fitted than mine have

been for such work. I have always known my own unfitness, by reason of the worldly cares with which I have been laden. Poverty makes the spirit poor, and the hands weak, and the heart sore,—and too often makes the conscience dull. May the latter never be the case with any of you." Then he uttered another short prayer, and, stepping down from the pulpit, walked out of the church, with his weeping wife hanging on his arm, and his daughter following them almost dissolved in tears. He never again entered that church as the pastor of the congregation.

There was an old lame man from Hoggle End leaning on his stick near the door as Mr. Crawley went out, and with him was his old lame wife. "He 'll pull through yet," said the old man to his wife; "you 'll see else. He 'll pull through because he 's so dogged. It 's dogged as does it."

On that night the position of the members of Mr. Crawley's household seemed to have been changed. There was something almost of elation in his mode of speaking, and he said soft, loving words, striving to comfort his wife. She, on the other hand, could say nothing to comfort him. She had been averse to the step he was taking, but had been unable to press her objection in opposition to his great argument as to duty. Since he had spoken to her in that strain which he had used with Robarts, she also had felt that she must be silent. But she could not even feign to feel the pride which comes from the performance of a duty. "What will he do when he comes out?" she said to her daughter. The coming out spoken of by her was the coming out of prison. It was natural enough that she should feel no elation.

The breakfast on Sunday morning was to her, perhaps, the saddest scene of her life. They sat down, the three together, at the usual hour,—nine o'clock,—but the morning had not been passed as was customary on Sundays. It had been Mr. Crawley's practice to go into the school from eight to nine; but on this Sunday he felt, as he told his wife, that his presence would be an intrusion there. But he requested Jane to go and perform her usual task. "If Mr. Thumble should come," he said to her, "be submissive to him in all things." Then he stood at his door, watching to see at what hour Mr. Thumble would reach the school. But Mr. Thumble did not attend the school on that morning. "And yet he was very express to me in his desire that I would not myself meddle with the duties," said Mr. Crawley to his wife as he stood at the door, —"unnecessarily urgent, as I must say I thought at the time." If Mrs. Crawley could have spoken out her thoughts about Mr. Thumble at that moment, her words would, I think, have surprised her husband.

At breakfast there was hardly a word spoken. Mr. Crawley took his crust and eat it mournfully,—almost ostentatiously. Jane tried and failed, and tried to hide her failure, failing in that also. Mrs. Crawley made no attempt. She sat behind her old teapot, with her hands clasped and her eyes fixed. It was as though some last day had come upon her,—this, the first Sunday of her husband's degradation. "Mary," he said to her, "why do you not eat?"

"I cannot," she replied, speaking not in a whisper, but in words which would hardly get themselves articulated. "I cannot. Do not ask me."

"For the honour of the Lord you will want the

strength which bread alone can give you," he said, intimating to her that he wished her to attend the service.

"Do not ask me to be there, Josiah. I cannot. It is too much for me."

"Nay; I will not press it," he said. "I can go alone." He uttered no word expressive of a wish that his daughter should attend church; but when the moment came Jane accompanied him. "What shall I do, mamma," she said, "if I find I cannot bear it?" "Try to bear it," the mother said. "Try, for his sake. You are stronger now than I am."

The tinkle of the church bell was heard at the usual time, and Mr. Crawley, hat in hand, stood ready to go forth. He had heard nothing of Mr. Thumble, but had made up his mind that Mr. Thumble would not trouble him. He had taken the precaution to request his churchwarden to be early at the church, so that Mr. Thumble might encounter no difficulty. The church was very near to the house, and any vehicle arriving might have been seen had Mr. Crawley watched closely. But no one had cared to watch Mr. Thumble's arrival at the church. He did not doubt that Mr. Thumble would be at the church. With reference to the school, he had had some doubt.

But just as he was about to start he heard the clatter of a gig. Up came Mr. Thumble to the door of the parsonage, and having come down from his gig was about to enter the house as though it were his own. Mr. Crawley greeted him in the pathway, raising his hat from his head, and expressing a wish that Mr. Thumble might not feel himself fatigued with his drive. "I will not ask you into my poor house," he said,

standing in the middle of the pathway; "for that my wife is ill."

"Nothing catching, I hope?" said Mr. Thumble.

"Her malady is of the spirit rather than of the flesh," said Mr. Crawley. "Shall we go on to the church?"

"Certainly,—by all means. How about the surplice?"

"You will find, I trust, that the churchwarden has everything in readiness. I have notified to him expressly your coming, with the purport that it may be so."

"You 'll take a part in the service, I suppose?" said Mr. Thumble.

"No part,—no part whatever," said Mr. Crawley, standing still for a moment as he spoke, and showing plainly by the tone of his voice how dismayed he was, how indignant he had been made, by so indecent a proposition. Was he giving up his pulpit to a stranger for any reason less cogent than one which made it absolutely imperative on him to be silent in that church which had so long been his own?

"Just as you please," said Mr. Thumble. "Only it 's rather hard lines to have to do it all myself after coming all the way from Barchester this morning." To this Mr. Crawley condescended to make no reply whatever.

In the porch of the church, which was the only entrance, Mr. Crawley introduced Mr. Thumble to the churchwarden, simply by a wave of the hand, and then passed on with his daughter to a seat which opened upon the aisle. Jane was going on to that which she had hitherto always occupied with her mother in the little chancel; but Mr. Crawley would not allow this.

Neither to him nor to any of his family was there attached any longer the privilege of using the chancel of the church of Hogglestock.

Mr. Thumble scrambled into the reading-desk some ten minutes after the proper time, and went through the morning service under what must be admitted to be serious difficulties. There were the eyes of Mr. Crawley fixed upon him throughout the work, and a feeling pervaded him that everybody there regarded him as an intruder. At first this was so strong upon him that Mr. Crawley pitied him, and would have encouraged him had it been possible. But as the work progressed, and as custom and the sound of his own voice emboldened him, there came to the man some touches of the arrogance which so generally accompanies cowardice, and Mr. Crawley's acute ear detected the moment when it was so. An observer might have seen that the motion of his hands was altered as they were lifted in prayer. Though he was praying, even in prayer he could not forget the man who was occupying his desk.

Then came the sermon, preached very often before, lasting exactly half-an-hour, and then Mr. Thumble's work was done. Itinerant clergymen, who preach now here and now there, as it had been the lot of Mr. Thumble to do, have at any rate this relief,—that they can preach their sermons often. From the communion-table Mr. Thumble had stated that, in the present peculiar circumstances of the parish, there would be no second service at Hogglestock for the present; and this was all he said or did peculiar to the occasion. The moment the service was over he got into his gig, and was driven back to Barchester.

"Mamma," said Jane, as they sat at their dinner, "such a sermon I am sure was never heard in Hogglestock before. Indeed, you can hardly call it a sermon. It was downright nonsense."

"My dear," said Mr. Crawley, energetically, "keep your criticisms for matters that are profane; then, though they be childish and silly, they may at least be innocent. Be critical on Euripides if you must be critical." But when Jane kissed her father after dinner, she, knowing his humour well, felt assured that her remarks had not been taken altogether in ill part.

Mr. Thumble was neither seen nor heard of again in the parish during the entire week.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. ARABIN IS CAUGHT.

One morning about the middle of April Mr. Toogood received a telegram from Venice which caused him instantly to leave his business in Bedford Row and take the first train for Silverbridge. "It seems to me that this job will be a deal of time and very little money," said his partner to him, when Toogood on the spur of the moment was making arrangements for his sudden departure and uncertain period of absence. "That 's about it," said Toogood. "A deal of time, some expense, and no returns. It 's not the kind of business a man can live upon; is it?" The partner growled, and Toogood went. But as we must go with Mr. Toogood down to Silverbridge, and as we cannot make the journey in this chapter, we will just indicate his departure and then go back to John Eames, who, as will be remembered, was just starting for Florence when we last saw him.

Our dear old friend Johnny had been rather proud of himself as he started from London. He had gotten an absolute victory over Sir Raffle Buffle, and that alone was gratifying to his feelings. He liked the excitement of a journey, and especially of a journey to Italy; and the importance of the cause of his journey was satisfactory to him. But above all things he was

delighted at having found that Lily Dale was pleased at his going. He had seen clearly that she was much pleased, and that she made something of a hero of him because of his alacrity in the cause of his cousin. He had partially understood,—had understood in a dim sort of way,—that his want of favour in Lily's eyes had come from some deficiency of his own in this respect. She had not found him to be a hero. She had known him first as a boy, with boyish belongings around him, and she had seen him from time to time as he became a man, almost with too much intimacy for the creation of that love with which he wished to fill her heart. His rival had come before her eyes for the first time with all the glories of Pall Mall heroism about him, and Lily in her weakness had been conquered by them. Since that she had learned how weak she had been,—how silly, how childish, she would say to herself when she allowed her memory to go back to the details of her own story; but not the less on that account did she feel the want of something heroic in a man before she could teach herself to look upon him as more worthy of her regard than other men. She had still unconsciously hoped in regard to Crosbie, but now that hope had been dispelled as unconsciously, simply by his appearance. There had been moments in which John Eames had almost risen to the necessary point,—had almost made good his footing on the top of some moderate but still sufficient mountain. But there had still been a succession of little tumbles,—unfortunate slips for which he himself should not always have been held responsible; and he had never quite stood upright on his pinnacle, visible to Lily's eyes as being really excelsior. Of all this John Eames himself

had an inkling which had often made him very uncomfortable. What the mischief was it that she wanted of him; and what was he to do? The days for plucking glory from the nettle danger were clean gone by. He was well dressed. He knew a good many of the right sort of people. He was not in debt. He had saved an old nobleman's life once upon a time, and had been a good deal talked about on that score. He had even thrashed the man who had ill-treated her. His constancy had been as the constancy of a Jacob! What was it that she wanted of him? But in a certain way he did know what was wanted; and now, as he started for Florence, intending to stop nowhere till he reached that city, he hoped that by this chivalrous journey he might even yet achieve the thing necessary.

But on reaching Paris he heard tidings of Mrs. Arabin which induced him to change his plans and make for Venice instead of for Florence. A banker at Paris, to whom he brought a letter, told him that Mrs. Arabin would now be found at Venice. This did not perplex him at all. It would have been delightful to see Florence,—but was more delightful still to see Venice. His journey was the same as far as Turin; but from Turin he proceeded through Milan to Venice, instead of going by Bologna to Florence. He had fortunately come armed with an Austrian passport,—as was necessary in those bygone days of Venetia's thraldom. He was almost proud of himself, as though he had done something great when he tumbled into his inn at Venice without having been in a bed since he left London.

But he was barely allowed to swim in a gondola, for on reaching Venice he found that Mrs. Arabin had

gone back to Florence. He had been directed to the hotel which Mrs. Arabin had used, and was there told that she had started the day before. She had received some letter from her husband, as the landlord thought, and had done so. That was all the landlord knew. Johnny was vexed, but became a little prouder than before as he felt it to be his duty to go on to Florence before he went to bed. There would be another night in a railway carriage, but he would live through it. There was just time to have a tub and a breakfast, to swim in a gondola, to look at the outside of the Doge's palace, and to walk up and down the piazza before he started again. It was hard work, but I think he would have been pleased had he heard that Mrs. Arabin had retreated from Florence to Rome. Had such been the case, he would have folded his cloak around him, and have gone on,—regardless of brigands,—thinking of Lily, and wondering whether anybody else had ever done so much before without going to bed. As it was he found that Mrs. Arabin was at the hotel in Florence, —still in bed, as he had arrived early in the morning. So he had another tub, another breakfast, and sent up his card. "Mr. John Eames,"—and across the top of it he wrote, "has come from England about Mr. Crawley." Then he threw himself on to a sofa in the hotel reading-room, and went fast asleep.

John had found an opportunity of talking to a young lady in the breakfast-room, and had told her of his deeds. "I only left London on Tuesday night, and I have come here, taking Venice on the road."

"Then you have travelled fast," said the young lady.

"I have n't seen a bed, of course," said John.

The young lady immediately afterwards told her father. "I suppose he must be one of those Foreign Office messengers," said the young lady.

"Anything but that," said the gentleman. "People never talk about their own trades. He 's probably a clerk with a fortnight's leave of absence, seeing how many towns he can do in the time. It 's the usual way of travelling now-a-days. When I was young and there were no railways, I remember going from Paris to Vienna without sleeping." Luckily for his present happiness John did not hear this.

He was still fast asleep when a servant came to him from Mrs. Arabin to say that she would see him at once. "Yes, yes; I 'm quite ready to go on," said Johnny, jumping up, and thinking of the journey to Rome. But there was no journey to Rome before him. Mrs. Arabin was almost in the next room, and there he found her.

The reader will understand that they had never met before, and hitherto knew nothing of each other. Mrs. Arabin had never heard the name of John Eames till John's card was put into her hands, and would not have known his business with her had he not written those few words upon it. "You have come about Mr. Crawley?" she said to him, eagerly. "I have heard from my father that somebody was coming."

"Yes, Mrs. Arabin; as hard as I could travel. I had expected to find you at Venice."

"Have you been at Venice?"

"I have just arrived from Venice. They told me at Paris I should find you there. However, that does not matter, as I have found you here. I wonder whether you can help us?"

"Do you know Mr. Crawley? Are you a friend of his?"

"I never saw him in my life; but he married my cousin."

"I gave him the cheque, you know," said Mrs. Arabin.

"What?" exclaimed Eames, literally almost knocked backwards by the easiness of the words which contained a solution for so terrible a difficulty. The Crawley case had assumed such magnitude, and the troubles of the Crawley family had been so terrible, that it seemed to him to be almost sacrilegious that words so simply uttered should suffice to cure everything. He had hardly hoped,—had at least barely hoped,—that Mrs. Arabin might be able to suggest something which would put them all on a track towards discovery of the truth. But he found that she had the clue in her hand, and that the clue was one which required no further delicacy of investigation. There would be nothing more to unravel; no journey to Jerusalem would be necessary!

"Yes," said Mrs. Arabin, "I gave it to him. They have been writing to my husband about it, and never wrote to me; and till I received a letter about it from my father, and another from my sister at Venice the day before yesterday, I knew nothing of the particulars of Mr. Crawley's trouble."

"Had you not heard that he had been taken before the magistrates?"

"No; not so much even as that. I had seen in Galignani something about a clergyman, but I did not know what clergyman; and I heard that there was something wrong about Mr. Crawley's money, but there

has always been something wrong about money with poor Mr. Crawley; and as I knew that my husband had been written to also, I did not interfere, further than to ask the particulars. My letters have followed me about, and I only learned at Venice, just before I came here, what was the nature of the case."

"And did you do anything?"

"I telegraphed at once to Mr. Toogood, who I understand is acting as Mr. Crawley's solicitor. My sister sent me his address."

"He is my uncle."

"I telegraphed to him, telling him that I had given Mr. Crawley the cheque, and then I wrote to Archdeacon Grantly giving him the whole history. I was obliged to come here before I could return home, but I intended to start this evening."

"And what is the whole history?" asked John Eames.

The history of the gift of the cheque was very simple. It has been told how Mr. Crawley in his dire distress had called upon his old friend at the deanery asking for pecuniary assistance. This he had done with so much reluctance that his spirit had given way while he was waiting in the dean's library, and he had wished to depart without accepting what the dean was quite willing to bestow upon him. From this cause it had come to pass there had been no time for explanatory words, even between the dean and his wife,—from whose private funds had in truth come the money which had been given to Mr. Crawley. For the private wealth of the family belonged to Mrs. Arabin, and not to the dean; and was left entirely in Mrs. Arabin's hands, to be disposed of as she might please. Pre-

viously to Mr. Crawley's arrival at the deanery this matter had been discussed between the dean and his wife, and it had been agreed between them that a sum of fifty pounds should be given. It should be given by Mrs. Arabin, but it was thought that the gift would come with more comfort to the recipient from the hands of his old friend than from those of his wife. There had been much discussion between them as to the mode in which this might be done with least offence to the man's feelings,—for they knew Mr. Crawley and his peculiarities well. At last it was agreed that the notes should be put in an envelope, which envelope the dean should have ready with him. But when the moment came the dean did not have the envelope ready, and was obliged to leave the room to seek his wife. And Mrs. Arabin explained to John Eames that even she had not had it ready, and had been forced to go to her own desk to fetch it. Then, at the last moment, with the desire of increasing the good to be done to people who were so terribly in want, she put the cheque for twenty pounds, which was in her possession as money of her own, along with the notes, and in this way the cheque had been given by the dean to Mr. Crawley. "I shall never forgive myself for not telling the dean," she said. "Had I done that all this trouble would have been saved!"

"But where did you get the cheque?" Eames asked with natural curiosity.

"Exactly," said Mrs. Arabin. "I have got to show now that I did not steal it,—have I not? Mr. Soames will indict me now. And, indeed, I have had some trouble to refresh my memory as to all the particulars, for you see it is more than a year past." But Mrs.

Arabin's mind was clearer on such matters than Mr. Crawley's, and she was able to explain that she had taken the cheque as part of the rent due to her from the landlord of the Dragon of Wantly, which inn was her property, having been the property of her first husband. For some years past there had been a difficulty about the rent, things not having gone at the Dragon of Wantly as smoothly as they had used to go. At one time the money had been paid half-yearly by the landlord's cheque on the bank at Barchester. For the last year-and-a-half this had not been done, and the money had come into Mrs. Arabin's hands at irregular periods and in irregular sums. There was at this moment rent due for twelve months, and Mrs. Arabin expressed her doubt whether she would get it on her return to Barchester. On the occasion to which she was now alluding the money had been paid into her own hands, in the deanery breakfast-parlour, by a man she knew very well,—not the landlord himself, but one bearing the landlord's name, whom she believed to be the landlord's brother, or at least his cousin. The man in question was named Daniel Stringer, and he had been employed in the Dragon of Wantly as a sort of clerk or managing man as long as she had known it. The rent had been paid to her by Daniel Stringer quite as often as by Daniel's brother or cousin, John Stringer, who was, in truth, the landlord of the hotel. When questioned by John respecting the persons employed at the inn, she said that she did believe that there had been rumours of something wrong. The house had been in the hands of the Stringers for many years,—before the property had been purchased by her husband's father,—and therefore there had been

an unwillingness to move them; but gradually, so she said, there had come upon her and her husband a feeling that the house must be put into other hands.

"But did you say nothing about the cheque?" John asked.

"Yes, I said a good deal about it. I asked why a cheque of Mr. Soames's was brought to me, instead of being taken to the bank for money; and Stringer explained to me that they were not very fond of going to the bank, as they owed money there, but that I could pay it into my account. Only I kept my account at the other bank."

"You might have paid it in there," said Johnny.

"I suppose I might, but I did n't. I gave it to poor Mr. Crawley instead,—like a fool, as I know now that I was. And so I have brought all this trouble on him and on her; and now I must rush home, without waiting for the dean, as fast the trains will carry me."

Eames offered to accompany her, and this offer was accepted. "It is hard upon you, though," she said; "you will see nothing of Florence. Three hours in Venice, and six in Florence, and no hours at all anywhere else, will be a hard fate to you on your first trip to Italy." But Johnny said "Excelsior" to himself once more, and thought of Lily Dale, who was still in London, hoping that she might hear of his exertions; and he felt, perhaps, also, that it would be pleasant to return with a dean's wife, and never hesitated. Nor would it do, he thought, for him to be absent in the excitement caused by the news of Mr. Crawley's innocence and injuries.

"I don't care a bit about that," he said. "Of course I should like to see Florence, and of course I should

like to go to bed; but I will live in hopes that I may do both some day." And so there grew to be a friendship between him and Mrs. Arabin even before they had started.

He was driven once through Florence; he saw the Venus de' Medici, and he saw the Seggiola; he looked up from the side of the Duomo to the top of the Campanile, and he walked round the back of the cathedral itself; he tried to inspect the doors of the Baptistery, and declared that the "David" was very fine. Then he went back to the hotel, dined with Mrs. Arabin, and started for England.

The dean was to have joined his wife at Venice, and then they were to have returned together, coming round by Florence. Mrs. Arabin had not, therefore, taken her things away from Florence when she left it, and had been obliged to return to pick them up on her journey homewards. He,—the dean,—had been delayed in his Eastern travels. Neither Syria nor Constantinople had got themselves done as quickly as he had expected, and he had, consequently, twice written to his wife, begging her to pardon the transgression of his absence for even yet a few days longer. "Everything, therefore," as Mrs. Arabin said, "has conspired to perpetuate this mystery, which a word from me would have solved. I owe more to Mr. Crawley than I can ever pay him."

"He will be very well paid, I think," said John, "when he hears the truth. If you could see inside his mind at this moment, I 'm sure you 'd find that he thinks he stole the cheque."

"He cannot think that, Mr. Eames. Besides, at at this moment I hope he has heard the truth."

"That may be, but he did think so. I do believe that he had not the slightest notion where he got it; and, which is more, not a single person in the whole county had a notion. People thought that he had picked it up and used it in his despair. And the bishop has been so hard upon him."

"Oh, Mr. Eames, that is the worst of all."

"So I am told. The bishop has a wife, I believe."

"Yes, he has a wife, certainly," said Mrs. Arabin.

"And people say that she is not very good-natured."

"There are some of us at Barchester who do not love her very dearly. I cannot say that she is one of my own especial friends."

"I believe she has been hard to Mr. Crawley," said John Eames.

"I should not be in the least surprised," said Mrs. Arabin.

Then they reached Turin, and there, taking up Galignani's Messenger in the reading-room of Trompetta's Hotel, John Eames saw that Mrs. Proudie was dead. "Look at that," said he, taking the paragraph to Mrs. Arabin; "Mrs. Proudie is dead!" "Mrs. Proudie dead!" she exclaimed. "Poor woman! Then there will be peace at Barchester!" "I never knew her very intimately," she afterwards said to her companion, "and I do not know that I have a right to say that she ever did me an injury. But I remember well her first coming into Barchester. My sister's father-in-law, the late bishop, was just dead. He was a mild, kind, dear old man, whom my father loved beyond all the world except his own children. You may suppose we were all a little sad. I was not specially connected with the cathedral then, except through my father,"—

and Mrs. Arabin, as she told all this, remembered that in the day of which she was speaking she was a young mourning widow,—"but I think I can never forget the sort of harsh-toned pæan of low-church trumpets with which that poor woman made her entry into the city. She might have been more lenient, as we had never sinned by being very high. She might, at any rate, have been more gentle with us at first. I think we had never attempted much beyond decency, good-will, and comfort. Our comfort she utterly destroyed. Good-will was not to her taste. And as for decency, when I remember some things, I must say that when the comfort and good-will went, the decency went along with them. And now she is dead! I wonder how the bishop will get on without her."

"Like a house on fire, I should think," said Johnny.

"Fie, Mr. Eames; you should n't speak in such a way on such a subject."

Mrs. Arabin and Johnny became fast friends as they journeyed home. There was a sweetness in his character which endeared him readily to women; though, as we have seen, there was a want of something to make one woman cling to him. He could be soft and pleasant-mannered. He was fond of making himself useful, and was a perfect master of all those little caressing modes of behaviour in which the caress is quite impalpable, and of which most women know the value and appreciate the comfort. By the time that they had reached Paris John had told Mrs. Arabin the whole story of Lily Dale and Crosbie, and Mrs. Arabin had promised to assist him, if any assistance might be in her power.

"Of course I have heard of Miss Dale," she said,

"because we know the De Courcys." Then she turned away her face, almost blushing, as she remembered the first time that she had seen that Lady Alexandrina De Courcy whom Mr. Crosbie had married. It had been at Mr. Thorne's house at Ullathorne, and on that day she had done a thing which she had never since remembered without blushing. But it was an old story now, and a story of which her companion knew nothing,—of which he never could know anything. That day at Ullathorne, Mrs. Arabin, the wife of the Dean of Barchester, than whom there was no more discreet clerical matron in the diocese, had—boxed a clergyman's ears!

"Yes," said John, speaking of Crosbie, "he was a wise fellow; he knew what he was about; he married an earl's daughter."

"And now I remember hearing that somebody gave him a terrible beating. Perhaps it was you?"

"It was n't terrible at all," said Johnny.

"Then it was you?"

"Oh, yes; it was I."

"Then it was you who saved poor old Lord De Guest from the bull?"

"Go on, Mrs. Arabin. There is no end of the grand things I 've done."

"You 're quite a hero of romance."

He bit his lip as he told himself that he was not enough of a hero. "I don't know about that," said Johnny. "I think what a man ought to do in these days is to seem not to care what he eats and drinks, and to have his linen very well got up. Then he 'll be a hero." But that was hard upon Lily.

"Is that what Miss Dale requires?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"I was not thinking about her particularly," said Johnny, lying.

They slept a night in Paris, as they had done also at Turin,—Mrs. Arabin not finding herself able to accomplish such marvels in the way of travelling as her companion had achieved,—and then arrived in London in the evening. She was taken to a certain quiet clerical hotel at the top of Suffolk Street, much patronised by bishops and deans of the better sort, expecting to find a message there from her husband. And there was the message,—just arrived. The dean had reached Florence three days after her departure; and as he would do the journey home in twenty-four hours less than she had taken, he would be there, at the hotel, on the day after to-morrow. "I suppose I may wait for him, Mr. Eames?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"I will see Mr. Toogood to-night, and I will call here to-morrow, whether I see him or not. At what hour will you be in?"

"Don't trouble yourself to do that. You must take care of Sir Raffle Buffle, you know."

"I shan't go near Sir Raffle Buffle to-morrow, nor yet the next day. You must n't suppose that I am afraid of Sir Raffle Buffle."

"You are only afraid of Lily Dale." From all which it may be seen that Mrs. Arabin and John Eames had become very intimate on their way home.

It was then arranged that he should call on Mr. Toogood that same night or early the next morning, and that he should come to the hotel at twelve o'clock

on the next day. Going along one of the passages he passed two gentlemen in shovel hats, with very black new coats, and knee-breeches; and Johnny could not but hear a few words which one clerical gentleman said to the other. "She was a woman of great energy, of wonderful spirit, but a firebrand, my lord,—a complete firebrand!" Then Johnny knew that the Dean of A. was talking to the Bishop of B. about the late Mrs. Proudie.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. TOOGOOD AT SILVERBRIDGE.

We will now go back to Mr. Toogood as he started for Silverbridge, on the receipt of Mrs. Arabin's telegram from Venice. "I gave cheque to Mr. Crawley. It was part of a sum of money. Will write to Archdeacon Grantly to-day, and return home at once." That was the telegram which Mr. Toogood received at his office, and on receiving which he resolved that he must start to Barchester immediately. "It is n't certainly what you may call a paying business," he said to his partner, who continued to grumble; "but it must be done all the same. If it don't get into the ledger in one way it will in another." So Mr. Toogood started for Silverbridge, having sent to his house in Tavistock Square for a small bag, a clean shirt, and a tooth-brush. And as he went down in the railway carriage, before he went to sleep he turned it all over in his mind. "Poor devil! I wonder whether any man ever suffered so much before. And as for that woman,—it 's ten thousand pities that she should have died before she heard it. Talk of heart-complaint; she 'd have had a touch of heart-complaint if she had known this!" Then, as he was speculating how Mrs. Arabin could have become possessed of the cheque, he went to sleep.

He made up his mind that the first person to be seen was Mr. Walker, and after that he would, if possible, go to Archdeacon Grantly. He was at first minded to go at once out to Hogglestock; but when he remembered how very strange Mr. Crawley was in all his ways, and told himself professionally that telegrams were but bad sources of evidence on which to depend for details, he thought that it would be safer if he were first to see Mr. Walker. There would be very little delay. In a day or two the archdeacon would receive his letter, and in a day or two after that Mrs. Arabin would probably be at home.

It was late in the evening before Mr. Toogood reached the house of the Silverbridge solicitor, having the telegram carefully folded in his pocket; and he was shown into the dining-room while the servant took his name up to Mr. Walker. The clerks were gone, and the office was closed; and persons coming on business at such times,—as they often did come to that house,—were always shown into the parlour. "I don't know whether master can see you to-night," said the girl; "but if he can, he 'll come down."

When the card was brought up to Mr. Walker, he was sitting alone with his wife. "It 's Toogood," said he; "poor Crawley's cousin."

"I wonder whether he has found anything out," said Mrs. Walker. "May he not come up here?" Then Mr. Toogood was summoned into the drawing-room, to the maid's astonishment; for Mr. Toogood had made no toilet sacrifices to the goddess or grace who presides over evening society in provincial towns,—and presented himself with the telegram in his hand. "We have found out all about poor Crawley's cheque,"

he said, before the maid-servant had closed the door. "Look at that," and he handed the telegram to Mr. Walker. The poor girl was obliged to go, though she would have given one of her ears to know the exact contents of that bit of paper.

"Walker, what is it?" said his wife, before Walker had had time to make the contents of the document his own.

"He got it from Mrs. Arabin," said Toogood.

"No!" said Mrs. Walker. "I thought that was it all along."

"It 's a pity you did n't say so before," said Mr. Walker.

"So I did; but a lawyer thinks that nobody can ever see anything but himself;—begging your pardon, Mr. Toogood, but I forgot you were one of us. But, Walker, do read it." Then the telegram was read. "I gave cheque to Mr. Crawley. It was part of a sum of money,"—with the rest of it. "I knew it would come out," said Mrs. Walker. "I was quite sure of it."

"But why the mischief did n't he say so?" said Walker.

"He did say that he got it from the dean," said Toogood.

"But he did n't get it from the dean; and the dean clearly knew nothing about it."

"I 'll tell you what it is," said Mrs. Walker; "it has been some private transaction between Mr. Crawley and Mrs. Arabin, which the dean was to know nothing about; and so he would n't tell. I must say I honour him."

"I don't think it has been that," said Walker.

"Had he known all through that it had come from Mrs. Arabin, he would never have said that Mr. Soames gave it to him, and then that the dean gave it him."

"The truth has been that he has known nothing about it," said Toogood; "and we shall have to tell him."

At that moment Mary Walker came into the room, and Mrs. Walker could not constrain herself. "Mary, Mr. Crawley is all right. He did n't steal the cheque. Mrs. Arabin gave it to him."

"Who says so? How do you know? Oh, dear; I am so happy, if it 's true." Then she saw Mr. Toogood, and curtseyed.

"It is quite true, my dear," said Mr. Walker. "Mr. Toogood has had a message by the wires from Mrs. Arabin at Venice. She is coming home at once, and no doubt everything will be put right. In the mean time, it may be a question whether we should not hold our tongues. Mr. Crawley himself, I suppose, knows nothing of it yet?"

"Not a word," said Toogood.

"Papa, I must tell Miss Prettyman," said Mary.

"I should think that probably all Silverbridge knows it by this time," said Mrs. Walker, "because Jane was in the room when the announcement was made. You may be sure that every servant in the house has been told." Mary Walker, not waiting for any further command from her father, hurried out of the room to convey the secret to her special circle of friends.

It was known throughout Silverbridge that night, and indeed it made so much commotion that it kept many people for an hour out of their beds. Ladies who were not in the habit of going out late at night without the fly from the George and Vulture, tied their

heads up in their handkerchiefs, and hurried up and down the street to tell each other that the great secret had been discovered, and that in truth Mr. Crawley had not stolen the cheque. The solution of the mystery was not known to all,—was known on that night only to the very select portion of the aristocracy of Silverbridge to whom it was communicated by Mary Walker or Miss Anne Prettyman. For Mary Walker, when earnestly entreated by Jane, the parlour-maid, to tell her something more of the great news, had so far respected her father's caution as to say not a word about Mrs. Arabin.

"Is it true, Miss Mary, that he did n't steal it?" Jane asked imploringly.

"It is true. He did not steal it."

"And who did, Miss Mary? Indeed, I won't tell anybody."

"Nobody. But don't ask any more questions, for I won't answer them. Get me my hat at once, for I want to go up to Miss Prettyman's."

Then Jane got Miss Walker's hat, and immediately afterwards scampered into the kitchen with the news. "Oh, law, cook, it 's all come out! Mr. Crawley 's as innocent as the unborn babe. The gentleman upstairs what 's just come, and was here once before,—for I know'd him immediate,—I heard him say so. And master said so too."

"Did master say so his own self?" asked the cook.

"Indeed he did; and Miss Mary told me the same this moment."

"If master said so, then there ain 't a doubt as they 'll find him innocent. And who took'd it, Jane?"

"Miss Mary says as nobody did n't steal it."

"That 's nonsense, Jane. It stands to reason as somebody had it as had n't ought to have had it. But I 'm as glad as anything as how that poor reverend gent 'll come off;—I am. They tells me it 's weeks sometimes before a bit of butcher's meat finds its way into his house." Then the groom and the housemaid and the cook, one after another, took occasion to slip out of the back door, and poor Jane, who had really been the owner of the news, was left alone to answer the bell.

Miss Walker found the two Miss Prettymans sitting together over their accounts in the elder Miss Prettyman's private room. And she could see at once by signs which were not unfamiliar to her that Miss Anne Prettyman was being scolded. It often happened that Miss Anne Prettyman was scolded, especially when the accounts were brought out upon the table. "Sister, they are illegible," Mary Walker heard, as the servant opened the door for her.

"I don't think it 's quite so bad as that," said Miss Anne, unable to restrain her defence. Then, as Mary entered the room, Miss Prettyman the elder laid her hands down on certain books and papers as though to hide them from profane eyes.

"I 'm glad to see you, Mary," said Miss Prettyman gravely.

"I 've brought such a piece of news," said Mary. "I knew you 'd be glad to hear it, so I ventured to disturb you."

"Is it good news?" said Anne Prettyman.

"Very good news. Mr. Crawley is innocent."

Both the ladies sprung on to their legs. Even Miss Prettyman herself jumped up on to her legs.

"No!" said Anne.

"Your father has discovered it?" said Miss Prettyman.

"Not exactly that. Mr. Toogood has come down from London to tell him. Mr. Toogood, you know, is Mr. Crawley's cousin; and he is a lawyer, like papa." It may be observed that ladies belonging to the families of solicitors always talk about lawyers, and never about attorneys or barristers.

"And does Mr. Toogood say that Mr. Crawley is innocent?" asked Miss Prettyman.

"He has heard it by a message from Mrs. Arabin. But you must n't mention this. You won't, please, because papa has asked me not. I told him that I should tell you." Then, for the first time, the frown passed away entirely from Miss Prettyman's face, and the papers and account-books were pushed aside, as being of no moment. The news had been momentous enough to satisfy her. Mary continued her story almost in a whisper. "It was Mrs. Arabin who sent the cheque to Mr. Crawley. She says so herself. So that makes Mr. Crawley quite innocent. I am so glad."

"But is n't it odd he did n't say so?" said Miss Prettyman.

"Nevertheless, it 's true," said Mary.

"Perhaps he forgot," said Anne Prettyman.

"Men don't forget such things as that," said the elder sister.

"I really do think Mr. Crawley could forget anything," said the younger sister.

"You may be sure it 's true," said Mary Walker, "because papa said so."

"If he said so, it must be true," said Miss Prettyman; "and I am rejoiced. I really am rejoiced.

Poor man! Poor ill-used man! And nobody has ever believed that he has really been guilty, even though they may have thought that he spent the money without any proper right to it. And now he will get off. But dear me, Mary, Mr. Smithe told me yesterday that he had already given up his living, and that Mr. Spooner, the minor canon, was trying to get it from the dean. But that was because Mr. Spooner and Mrs. Proudie had quarrelled; and as Mrs. Proudie is gone, Mr. Spooner very likely won't want to move now."

"They 'll never go and put anybody into Hogglestock, Annabella, over Mr. Crawley's head," said Anne.

"I did n't say that they would. Surely I may be allowed to repeat what I hear, like another person, without being snapped up."

"I did n't mean to snap you up, Annabella."

"You 're always snapping me up. But if this is true, I cannot say how glad I am. My poor Grace! Now, I suppose, there will be no difficulty, and Grace will become a great lady." Then they discussed very minutely the chances of Grace Crawley's promotion.

John Walker, Mr. Winthrop, and several others of the chosen spirits of Silverbridge, were playing whist at a provincial club, which had established itself in the town, when the news was brought to them. Though Mr. Winthrop was the partner of the great Walker, and though John Walker was the great man's son, I fear that the news reached their ears in but an underhand sort of way. As for the great man himself, he never went near the club, preferring his slippers and tea at home. The Walkerian groom, rushing up the street to the George and Vulture, paused a moment to tell his tidings to the club porter; from the club porter

it was whispered respectfully to the Silverbridge apothecary, who, by special grace, was a member of the club; —and was by him repeated with much cautious solemnity over the card-table. "Who told you that, Balsam?" said John Walker, throwing down his cards.

"I 've just heard it," said Balsam.

"I don't believe it," said John.

"I should n't wonder if it 's true," said Winthrop. "I always said that something would turn up."

"Will you bet three to one he is not found guilty?" said John Walker.

"Done," said Winthrop; "in pounds." That morning the odds in the club against the event had been only two to one. But as the matter was discussed, the men in the club began to believe the tidings, and before he went home, John Walker would have been glad to hedge his bet on any terms. After he had spoken to his father, he gave his money up for lost.

But Mr. Walker,—the great Walker,—had more to do that night before his son came home from the club. He and Mr. Toogood agreed that it would be right that they should see Dr. Tempest at once, and they went over together to the rectory. It was past ten at this time, and they found the doctor almost in the act of putting out the candles for the night. "I could not but come to you, doctor," said Mr. Walker, "with the news my friend has brought. Mrs. Arabin gave the cheque to Crawley. Here is a telegram from her saying so." And the telegram was handed to the doctor.

He stood perfectly silent for a few minutes, reading it over and over again. "I see it all," he said, when he spoke at last. "I see it all now; and I must own I was never before so much puzzled in my life."

"I own I can't see why she should have given him Mr. Soames's cheque," said Mr. Walker.

"I can't say where she got it, and I own I don't much care," said Dr. Tempest. "But I don't doubt but what she gave it him without telling the dean, and that Crawley thought it came from the dean. I 'm very glad. I am, indeed, very glad. I do not know that I ever pitied a man so much in my life as I have pitied Mr. Crawley."

"It must have been a hard case when it has moved him," said Mr. Walker to Mr. Toogood as they left the clergyman's house; and then the Silverbridge attorney saw the attorney from London home to his inn.

It was the general opinion at Silverbridge that the news from Venice ought to be communicated to the Crawleys by Major Grantly. Mary Walker had expressed this opinion very strongly, and her mother had agreed with her. Miss Prettyman also felt that poetical justice, or, at least, the romance of justice, demanded this; and, as she told her sister Anne after Mary Walker left her, she was of opinion that such an arrangement might tend to make things safe. "I do think he is an honest man and a fine fellow," said Miss Prettyman; "but, my dear, you know what the proverb says, 'There 's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'" Miss Prettyman thought that anything which might be done to prevent a slip ought to be done. The idea that the pleasant task of taking the news out to Hogglestock ought to be confined to Major Grantly was very general; but then Mr. Walker was of opinion that the news ought not to be taken to Hogglestock at all till something more certain than the telegram had reached them. Early on the following morning the

two lawyers again met, and it was arranged between them that the London lawyer should go over at once to Barchester, and that the Silverbridge lawyer should see Major Grantly. Mr. Toogood was still of opinion that with due diligence something might yet be learned as to the cheque, by inquiry among the denizens of the Dragon of Wantly; and his opinion to this effect was stronger than ever when he learned from Mr. Walker that the Dragon of Wantly belonged to Mrs. Arabin.

Mr. Walker, after breakfast, had himself driven up in his open carriage to Cosby Lodge, and, as he entered the gates, observed that the auctioneer's bills as to the sale had been pulled down. The Mr. Walkers of the world know everything, and our Mr. Walker had quite understood that the major was leaving Cosby Lodge because of some misunderstanding with his father. The exact nature of the misunderstanding he did not know, even though he was Mr. Walker, but had little doubt that it referred in some way to Grace Crawley. If the archdeacon's objection to Grace arose from the imputation against the father, that objection would now be removed, but the abolition of the posters could not as yet have been owing to any such cause as that. Mr. Walker found the major at the gate of the farm-yard attached to Cosby Lodge, and perceived that at that very moment he was engaged in superintending the abolition of sundry other auctioneer's bills from sundry other posts. "What is all this about?" said Mr. Walker, greeting the major. "Is there to be no sale, after all?"

"It has been postponed," said the major.

"Postponed for good, I hope? Bill to be read again this day six months!" said Mr. Walker.

"I rather think not. But circumstances have induced me to have it put off."

Mr. Walker had got out of the carriage and had taken Major Grantly aside. "Just come a little further," he said; "I 've something special to tell you. News reached me last night which will clear Mr. Crawley altogether. We know now where he got the cheque."

"You don't tell me so!"

"Yes, I do. And though the news has reached us in such a way that we cannot act upon it till it 's confirmed, I do not in the least doubt it."

"And how did he get it?"

"You cannot guess?"

"Not in the least," said the major; "unless, after all, Soames gave it to him."

"Soames did not give it to him, but Mrs. Arabin did."

"Mrs. Arabin?"

"Yes, Mrs. Arabin."

"Not the dean?"

"No, not the dean. What we know is this, that your aunt has telegraphed to Crawley's cousin, Toogood, to say that she gave Crawley that cheque, and that she has written to your father about it at length. We do not like to tell Crawley till that letter has been received. It is so easy, you know, to misunderstand a telegram, and the wrong copying of a word may make such a mistake!"

"When was it received?"

"Toogood received it in London only yesterday morning. Your father will not get his letter, as I calculate, till the day after to-morrow. But, perhaps, you

had better go over and see him, and prepare him for it. Toogood has gone to Barchester this morning." To this proposition Grantly made no immediate answer. He could not but remember the terms on which he had left his father; and though he had, most unwillingly, pulled down the auctioneer's bills, in compliance with his mother's last prayer to him,—and, indeed, had angrily told the auctioneer to send him in his bill when the auctioneer had demurred to these proceedings,—nevertheless he was hardly prepared to discuss the matter of Mr. Crawley with his father in pleasant words,—in words which should be full of rejoicing. It was a great thing for him, Henry Grantly, that Mr. Crawley should be innocent, and he did rejoice; but he had intended his father to understand that he meant to persevere, whether Mr. Crawley were innocent or guilty, and thus he would now lose an opportunity for exhibiting his obstinacy,—an opportunity which had not been without a charm to him. He must console himself as best he might with the returning prospect of assured prosperity, and with his renewed hopes as to the Plumstead foxes! "We think, major, that when the time comes you ought to be the bearer of the news to Hogglestock," said Mr. Walker. Then the major did undertake to convey the news to Hogglestock, but he made no promise as to going over to Plumstead.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. TOOGOOD AT THE DRAGON OF WANTLY.

In accordance with his arrangement with Mr. Walker, Mr. Toogood went over to Barchester early in the morning and put himself up at the Dragon of Wantly. He now knew the following facts: that Mr. Soames, when he lost his cheque, had had with him one of the servants from that inn,—that the man who had been with Mr. Soames had gone to New Zealand, —that the cheque had found its way into the hands of Mrs. Arabin, and that Mrs. Arabin was the owner of the inn in question. So much he believed to be within his knowledge, and if his knowledge should prove to be correct, his work would be done as far as Mr. Crawley was concerned. If Mr. Crawley had not stolen the cheque, and if that could be proved, it would be a question of no great moment to Mr. Toogood who had stolen it. But he was a sportsman in his own line who liked to account for his own fox. As he was down at Barchester, he thought he might as well learn how the cheque had got into Mrs. Arabin's hands. No doubt that for her own personal possession of it she would be able to account on her return. Probably such account would be given in her first letter home. But it might be well that he should be prepared with any small circumstantial details which he might be able to pick up at the inn.

He reached Barchester before breakfast, and in ordering his tea and toast, reminded the old waiter with the dirty towel of his former acquaintance with him. "I remember you, sir," said the old waiter. "I remember you very well. You was asking questions about the cheque which Mr. Soames lost afore Christmas." Mr. Toogood certainly had asked one question on the subject. He had inquired whether a certain man who had gone to New Zealand had been the post-boy who accompanied Mr. Soames when the cheque was lost; and the waiter had professed to know nothing about Mr. Soames or the cheque. He now perceived at once that the gist of the question had remained on the old man's mind, and that he was recognised as being in some way connected with the lost money.

"Did I? Ah, yes; I think I did. And I think you told me that he was the man?"

"No, sir; I never told you that."

"Then you told me that he was n't."

"Nor I did n't tell you that neither," said the waiter angrily.

"Then what the devil did you tell me?" To this further question the waiter sulkily declined to give any answer, and soon afterwards left the room. Toogood, as soon as he had done his breakfast, rang the bell, and the same man appeared. "Will you tell Mr. Stringer that I should be glad to see him if he 's disengaged?" said Mr. Toogood. "I know he 's bad with the gout, and therefore, if he 'll allow me, I 'll go to him instead of his coming to me." Mr. Stringer was the landlord of the inn. The waiter hesitated a moment, and then declared that to the best of his belief

his master was not down. He would go and see. Toogood, however, would not wait for that; but rising quickly and passing the waiter, crossed the hall from the coffee-room, and entered what was called the bar. The bar was a small room connected with the hall by a large open window, at which orders for rooms were given and cash was paid and glasses of beer were consumed,—and a good deal of miscellaneous conversation was carried on. The barmaid was here at the window, and there was also, in a corner of the room, a man at a desk with a red nose. Toogood knew that the man at the desk with the red nose was Mr. Stringer's clerk. So much he had learned in his former rummaging about the inn. And he also remembered at this moment that he had observed the man with the red nose standing under a narrow archway in the close as he was coming out of the deanery, on the occasion of his visit to Mr. Harding. It had not occurred to him then that the man with the red nose was watching him, but it did occur to him now that the man with the red nose had been there, under the arch, with the express purpose of watching him on that occasion. Mr. Toogood passed quickly through the bar into an inner parlour, in which was sitting Mr. Stringer, the landlord, propped among his cushions. Toogood, as he had entered the hotel, had seen Mr. Stringer so placed, through the two doors, which at that moment had both happened to be open. He knew, therefore, that his old friend the waiter had not been quite true to him in suggesting that his master was not as yet down. As Toogood cast a glance of his eye on the man with the red nose, he told himself the old story of the apparition under the archway.

"Mr. Stringer," said Mr. Toogood to the landlord, "I hope I 'm not intruding."

"Oh dear, no, sir," said the forlorn man. "Nobody ever intrudes coming in here. I 'm always happy to see gentlemen,—only mostly I 'm so bad with the gout."

"Have you got a sharp touch of it just now, Mr. Stringer?"

"Not just to-day, sir. I 've been a little easier since Saturday. The worst of this burst is over. But Lord bless you, sir, it don't leave me,—not for a fortnight at a time, now; it don't. And it ain't what I drink, nor it ain't what I eat."

"Constitutional, I suppose?" said Toogood.

"Look here, sir;" and Mr. Stringer showed his visitor the chalk-stones in all his knuckles. "They say I 'm all a mass of chalk. I sometimes think they 'll break me up to mark the scores behind my own door with." And Mr. Stringer laughed at his own wit.

Mr. Toogood laughed too. He laughed loud and cheerily. And then he asked a sudden question, keeping his eye as he did so upon a little square open window which communicated between the landlord's private room and the bar. Through this small aperture he could see as he stood a portion of the hat worn by the man with the red nose. Since he had been in the room with the landlord, the man with the red nose had moved his head twice, on each occasion drawing himself closer into his corner; but Mr. Toogood, by moving also, had still contrived to keep a morsel of the hat in sight. He laughed cheerily at the landlord's joke, and then he asked a certain question,—looking well at the morsel of the hat as he did so. "Mr. Stringer,"

said he, "how do you pay your rent, and to whom do you pay it?" There was immediately a jerk in the hat, and then it disappeared. Toogood, stepping to the open door, saw that the red-nosed clerk had taken his hat off and was very busy at his accounts.

"How do I pay my rent?" said Mr. Stringer the landlord. "Well, sir, since this cursed gout has been so bad, it 's hard enough to pay it at all sometimes. You ain't sent here to look for it, sir, are you?"

"Not I," said Toogood. "It was only a chance question." He felt that he had nothing more to do with Mr. Stringer the landlord. Mr. Stringer the landlord knew nothing about Mr. Soames's cheque. "What's the name of your clerk?" said he.

"The name of my clerk?" said Mr. Stringer. "Why do you want to know the name of my clerk?"

"Does he ever pay your rent for you?"

"Well, yes; he does, at times. He pays it into the bank for the lady as owns the house. Is there any reason for your asking these questions, sir? It is n't usual, you know, for a stranger, sir."

Toogood during the whole of this time was standing with his eye upon the red-nosed man, and the red-nosed man could not move. The red-nosed man heard all the questions and the landlord's answers, and could not even pretend that he did not hear them. "I am my cousin's clerk," said he, putting on his hat, and coming up to Mr. Toogood with a swagger. "My name is Dan Stringer, and I 'm Mr. John Stringer's cousin. I 've lived with Mr. John Stringer for twelve year and more, and I 'm a'most as well known in Barchester as himself. Have you anything to say to me, sir?"

"Well, yes; I have," said Toogood.

"I believe you 're one of them attorneys from London?" said Mr. Dan Stringer.

"That 's true. I am an attorney from London."

"I hope there 's nothing wrong?" said the gouty man, trying to get off his chair, but not succeeding. "If there is anything wronger than usual, Dan, do tell me. Is there anything wrong, sir?" and the landlord appealed piteously to Mr. Toogood.

"Never you mind, John," said Dan. "You keep yourself quiet, and don't answer none of his questions. He 's one of them low sort, he is. I know him. I knowed him for what he is directly I saw him. Ferreting about,—that 's his game; to see if there 's anything to be got."

"But what is he ferreting here for?" said Mr. John Stringer.

"I 'm ferreting for Mr. Soames's cheque for twenty pounds," said Mr. Toogood.

"That 's the cheque that the parson stole," said Dan Stringer. "He 's to be tried for it at the 'sizes."

"You 've heard about Mr. Soames and his cheque, and about Mr. Crawley, I dare say?" said Toogood.

"I 've heard a deal about them," said the landlord.

"And so, I dare say, have you?" said Toogood, turning to Dan Stringer. But Dan Stringer did not seem inclined to carry on the conversation any further. When he was hardly pressed, he declared that he just had heard that there was some parson in trouble about a sum of money; but that he knew no more about it than that. He did n't know whether it was a cheque or a note that the parson had taken, and had never been sufficiently interested in the matter to make any inquiry.

"But you 've just said that Mr. Soames's cheque was the cheque the parson stole," said the astonished landlord, turning, with open eyes, upon his cousin.

"You be blowed," said Dan Stringer the clerk to Mr. John Stringer the landlord; and then walked out of the room back to the bar.

"I understand nothing about it,—nothing at all," said the gouty man.

"I understand pretty nearly all about it," said Mr. Toogood, following the red-nosed clerk. There was no necessity that he should trouble the landlord any further. He left the room, and went through the bar, and as he passed out along the hall, he found Dan Stringer with his hat on talking to the waiter. The waiter immediately pulled himself up, and adjusted his dirty napkin under his arm, after the fashion of waiters, and showed that he intended to be civil to the customers of the house. But he of the red nose cocked his hat, and looked with insolence at Mr. Toogood, and defied him. "There 's nothing I do hate so much as them low-bred Old Bailey attorneys," said Mr. Dan Stringer to the waiter, in a voice intended to reach Mr. Toogood's ears. Then Mr. Toogood told himself that Dan Stringer was not the thief himself, and that it might be very difficult to prove that Dan had even been the receiver of stolen goods. He had, however, no doubt in his own mind but that such was the case.

He first went to the police-office, and there explained his business. Nobody at the police-office pretended to forget Mr. Soames's cheque, or Mr. Crawley's position. The constable went so far as to swear that there was n't a man, woman, or child in all Barchester who was not talking of Mr. Crawley at that very moment.

Then Mr. Toogood went with the constable to the private house of the mayor, and had a little conversation with the mayor. "Not guilty!" said the mayor, with incredulity, when he first heard the news about Crawley. But when he heard Mr. Toogood's story, or as much of it as it was necessary that he should hear, he yielded reluctantly. "Dear, dear!" he said. "I 'd have bet anything 't was he who stole it." And after that the mayor was quite sad. Only let us think what a comfortable excitement it would create throughout England if it was surmised that an archbishop had forged a deed; and how much England would lose when it was discovered that the archbishop was innocent! As the archbishop and his forgery would be to England, so was Mr. Crawley and the cheque for twenty pounds to Barchester and its mayor. Nevertheless the mayor promised his assistance to Mr. Toogood.

Mr. Toogood, still neglecting his red-nosed friend, went next to the deanery, hoping that he might again see Mr. Harding. Mr. Harding was, he was told, too ill to be seen. Mr. Harding, Mrs. Baxter said, could never be seen now by strangers, nor yet by friends, unless they were very old friends. "There 's been a deal of change since you were here last, sir. I remember your coming, sir. You were talking to Mr. Harding about the poor clergyman as is to be tried." He did not stop to tell Mrs. Baxter the whole story of Mr. Crawley's innocence; but having learned that a message had been received to say that Mrs. Arabin would be home on the next Tuesday,—this being Friday,—he took his leave of Mrs. Baxter. His next visit was to Mr. Soames, who lived three miles out in the country.

He found it very difficult to convince Mr. Soames. Mr. Soames was more staunch in his belief of Mr. Crawley's guilt than any one whom Toogood had yet encountered. "I never took the cheque out of his house," said Mr. Soames.

"But you have not stated that on oath," said Mr. Toogood.

"No," rejoined the other; "and I never will. I can't swear to it; but yet I 'm sure of it." He acknowledged that he had been driven by a man named Scuttle, and that Scuttle might have picked up the cheque, if it had been dropped in the gig. But the cheque had not been dropped in the gig. The cheque had been dropped in Mr. Crawley's house.

"Why did he say, then, that I paid it to him?" said Mr. Soames, when Toogood spoke confidently of Crawley's innocence.

"Ah, why indeed?" answered Toogood. "If he had not been fool enough to do that, we should have been saved all this trouble. All the same, he did not steal your money, Mr. Soames; and Jem Scuttle did steal it. Unfortunately Jem Scuttle is in New Zealand by this time."

"Of course, it is possible," said Mr. Soames, as he bowed Mr. Toogood out. Mr. Soames did not like Mr. Toogood.

That evening a gentleman with a red nose asked at the Barchester station for a second-class ticket for London by the up night-mail train. He was well known at the station, and the station-master made some little inquiry. "All the way to London to-night, Mr. Stringer?" he said.

"Yes,—all the way," said the red-nosed man, sulkily.

"I don't think you 'd better go to London to-night, Mr. Stringer," said a tall man, stepping out of the door of the booking-office. "I think you 'd better come back with me to Barchester. I do indeed." There was some little argument on the occasion; but the stranger, who was a detective policeman, carried his point, and Mr. Dan Stringer did return to Barchester.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THERE IS COMFORT AT PLUMSTEAD.

Henry Grantly had written the following short letter to Mrs. Grantly when he made up his mind to pull down the auctioneer's bills:—

"Dear Mother,—I have postponed the sale, not liking to refuse you anything. As far as I can see, I shall still be forced to leave Cosby Lodge, as I certainly shall do all I can to make Grace Crawley my wife. I say this that there may be no misunderstanding with my father. The auctioneer has promised to have the bills removed.

"Your affectionate son,

"Henry Grantly."

This had been written by the major on the Friday before Mr. Walker had brought up to him the tidings of Mr. Toogood and Mrs. Arabin's solution of the Crawley difficulty; but it did not reach Plumstead till the following morning. Mrs. Grantly immediately took the good news about the sale to her husband,—not of course showing him the letter, being far too wise for that, and giving him credit for being too wise to ask for it. "Henry has arranged with the auctioneer," she said joyfully; "and the bills have been all pulled down."

"How do you know?"

"I 've just heard from him. He has told me so. Come, my dear, let me have the pleasure of hearing you say that things shall be pleasant again between you and him. He has yielded."

"I don't see much yielding in it."

"He has done what you wanted. What more can he do?"

"I want him to come over here, and take an interest in things, and not treat me as though I were nobody." Within an hour of this the major had arrived at Plumstead, laden with the story of Mrs. Arabin and the cheque, and of Mr. Crawley's innocence,—laden not only with such tidings as he had received from Mr. Walker, but also with further details, which he had received from Mr. Toogood. For he had come through Barchester, and had seen Mr. Toogood on his way. This was on the Saturday morning, and he had breakfasted with Mr. Toogood at the Dragon of Wantly. Mr. Toogood had told him of his suspicions,—how the red-nosed man had been stopped, and had been summoned as a witness for Mr. Crawley's trial,—and how he was now under the surveillance of the police. Grantly had not cared very much about the red-nosed man, confining his present solicitude to the question whether Grace Crawley's father would certainly be shown to have been innocent of the theft. "There 's not a doubt about it, major," said Mr. Toogood; "not a doubt on earth. But we 'd better be a little quiet till your aunt comes home,—just a little quiet. She 'll be here in a day or two, and I won't budge till she comes." In spite of his desire for quiescence Mr. Toogood consented to a revelation being at once made

to the archdeacon and Mrs. Grantly. "And I 'll tell you what, major; as soon as ever Mrs. Arabin is here, and has given us her own word to act on, you and I will go over to Hogglestock and astonish them. I should like to go myself, because, you see, Mrs. Crawley is my cousin, and we have taken a little trouble about this matter." To this the major assented; but he altogether declined to assist in Mr. Toogood's speculations respecting the unfortunate Dan Stringer. It was agreed between them that for the present no visit should be made to the palace, as it was thought that Mr. Thumble had better be allowed to do the Hogglestock duties on the next Sunday. As matters went, however, Mr. Thumble did not do so. He had paid his last visit to Hogglestock.

It may be as well to explain here that the unfortunate Mr. Snapper was constrained to go out to Hogglestock on the Sunday which was now approaching,—which fell out as follows. It might be all very well for Mr. Toogood to arrange that he would not tell this person or that person of the news which he had brought down from London; but as he had told various people in Silverbridge, as he had told Mr. Soames, and as he had told the police at Barchester, of course the tale found its way to the palace. Mr. Thumble heard it, and having come by this time thoroughly to hate Hogglestock and all that belonged to it, he pleaded to Mr. Snapper that this report afforded ample reason why he need not again visit that detestable parish. Mr. Snapper did not see it in the same light. "You may be sure Mr. Crawley will not get into the pulpit after his resignation, Mr. Thumble," said he.

"His resignation means nothing," said Thumble.

"It means a great deal," said Snapper; "and the duties must be provided for."

"I won't provide for them," said Thumble; "and so you may tell the bishop." In these days Mr. Thumble was very angry with the bishop, for the bishop had not yet seen him since the death of Mrs. Proudie.

Mr. Snapper had no alternative but to go to the bishop. The bishop in these days was very mild to those whom he saw, given but to few words, and a little astray,—as though he had had one of his limbs cut off,—as Mr. Snapper expressed it to Mrs. Snapper. "I should n't wonder if he felt as though all his limbs were cut off," said Mrs. Snapper; "you must give him time, and he 'll come round by-and-bye." I am inclined to think that Mrs. Snapper's opinion of the bishop's feelings and condition was correct. In his difficulty respecting Hogglestock and Mr. Thumble Mr. Snapper went to the bishop, and spoke perhaps a little harshly of Mr. Thumble.

"I think, upon the whole, Snapper, that you had better go yourself," said the bishop.

"Do you think so, my lord?" said Snapper. "It will be inconvenient."

"Everything is inconvenient; but you 'd better go. And look here, Snapper, if I were you, I would n't say anything out at Hogglestock about the cheque. We don't know what it may come to yet." Mr. Snapper, with a heavy heart, left his patron, not at all liking the task that was before him. But his wife encouraged him to be obedient. He was the owner of a one-horse carriage, and the work was not, therefore, so hard to him as it would have been and had been to

poor Mr. Thumble. And, moreover, his wife promised to go with him. Mr. Snapper and Mrs. Snapper did go over to Hogglestock, and the duty was done. Mrs. Snapper spoke a word or two to Mrs. Crawley, and Mr. Snapper spoke a word or two to Mr. Crawley; but not a word was said about the new news as to Mr. Soames's cheque, which was now almost current in Barchester. Indeed, no whisper about it had as yet reached Hogglestock.

"One word with you, reverend sir," said Mr. Crawley to the chaplain, as the latter was coming out of the church, "as to the parish work, sir, during the week; —I should be glad if you would favour me with your opinion."

"About what, Mr. Crawley?"

"Whether you think that I may be allowed, without scandal, to visit the sick,—and to give instruction in the school."

"Surely;—surely, Mr. Crawley. Why not?"

"Mr. Thumble gave me to understand that the bishop was very urgent that I should interfere in no way in the ministrations of the parish. Twice did he enjoin on me that I should not interfere,—unnecessarily, as it seemed to me."

"Quite unnecessary," said Mr. Snapper. "And the bishop will be obliged to you, Mr. Crawley, if you 'll just see that the things go on all straight."

"I wish it were possible to know with accuracy what his idea of straightness is," said Mr. Crawley to his wife. "It may be that things are straight to him when they are buried as it were out of sight, and put away without trouble. I hope it be not so with the bishop." When he went into his school and remem-

bered,—as he did remember through every minute of his teaching,—that he was to receive no portion of the poor stipend which was allotted for the clerical duties of the parish, he told himself that there was gross injustice in the way in which things were being made straight at Hogglestock.

But we must go back to the major and to the archdeacon at Plumstead,—in which comfortable parish things were generally made straight more easily than at Hogglestock. Henry Grantly went over from Barchester to Plumstead in a gig from the Dragon, and made his way at once into his father's study. The archdeacon was seated there with sundry manuscripts before him, and with one half-finished manuscript,—as was his wont on every Saturday morning. "Halloo, Harry," he said. "I did n't expect you in the least." It was barely an hour since he had told Mrs. Grantly that his complaint against his son was that he would n't come and make himself comfortable at the rectory.

"Father," said he, giving the archdeacon his hand, "you have heard nothing yet about Mr. Crawley?"

"No," said the archdeacon, jumping up; "nothing new;—what is it?" Many ideas about Mr. Crawley at that moment flitted across the archdeacon's mind. Could it be that the unfortunate man had committed suicide, overcome by his troubles?

"It has all come out. He got the cheque from my aunt."

"From your aunt Eleanor?"

"Yes; from my aunt Eleanor. She has telegraphed over from Venice to say that she gave the identical cheque to Crawley. That is all we know at present,

—except that she has written an account of the matter to you, and that she will be here herself as quick as she can come."

"Who got the message, Henry?"

"Crawley's lawyer,—a fellow named Toogood, a cousin of his wife's;—a very decent fellow," added the major, remembering how necessary it was that he should reconcile his father to all the Crawley belongings. "He 's to be over here on Monday, and then will arrange what is to be done."

"Done in what way, Henry?"

"There 's a great deal to be done yet. Crawley does not know himself at this moment how the cheque got into his hands. He must be told, and something must be settled about the living. They 've taken the living away from him among them. And then the indictment must be quashed, or something of that kind done. Toogood has got hold of the scoundrel at Barchester who really stole the cheque from Soames;—or thinks that he has. It 's that Dan Stringer."

"He 's got hold of a regular scamp, then. I never knew any good of Dan Stringer," said the archdeacon.

Then Mrs. Grantly was told, and the whole story was repeated again, with many expressions of commiseration in reference to all the Crawleys. The archdeacon did not join in these at first, being rather shy on that head. It was very hard for him to have to speak to his son about the Crawleys as though they were people in all respects estimable and well-conducted, and satisfactory. Mrs. Grantly understood this so well, that every now and then she said some half-laughing word respecting Mr. Crawley's peculiarities, feeling that in this way she might ease her hus-

band's difficulties. "He must be the oddest man that ever lived," said Mrs. Grantly, "not to have known where he got the cheque." The archdeacon shook his head and rubbed his hands as he walked about the room. "I suppose too much learning has upset him," said the archdeacon. "They say he 's not very good at talking English, but put him on in Greek and he never stops."

The archdeacon was perfectly aware that he had to admit Mr. Crawley to his good-will, and that as for Grace Crawley,—it was essentially necessary that she should be admitted to his heart of hearts. He had promised as much. It must be acknowledged that Archdeacon Grantly always kept his promises, and especially such promises as these. And indeed it was the nature of the man that when he had been very angry with those he loved, he should be unhappy until he had found some escape from his anger. He could not endure to have to own himself to have been in the wrong, but he could be content with a very incomplete recognition of his having been in the right. The posters had been pulled down, and Mr. Crawley, as he was now told, had not stolen the cheque. That was sufficient. If his son would only drink a glass or two of wine with him comfortably, and talk dutifully about the Plumstead foxes, all should be held to be right, and Grace Crawley should be received with lavish paternal embraces. The archdeacon had kissed Grace once, and felt that he could do so again without an unpleasant strain upon his feelings.

"Say something to your father about the property after dinner," said Mrs. Grantly to her son when they were alone together.

"About what property?"

"About this property, or any property; you know what I mean;—something to show that you are interested about his affairs. He is doing the best he can to make things right." After dinner, over the claret, Mr. Thorne's terrible sin in reference to the trapping of foxes was accordingly again brought up, and the archdeacon became beautifully irate, and expressed his animosity,—which he did not in the least feel,—against an old friend with an energy which would have delighted his wife, if she could have heard him. "I shall tell Thorne my mind, certainly. He and I are very old friends; we have known each other all our lives; but I cannot put up with this kind of thing,—and I will not. It 's all because he 's afraid of his own gamekeeper." And yet the archdeacon had never ridden after a fox in his life, and never meant to do so. Nor had he in truth been always so very anxious that foxes should be found in his coverts. That fox which had been so fortunately trapped just outside the Plumstead property afforded a most pleasant escape for the steam of his anger. When he began to talk to his wife that evening about Mr. Thorne's wicked gamekeeper, she was so sure that all was right, that she said a word of her extreme desire to see Grace Crawley.

"If he is to marry her, we might as well have her over here," said the archdeacon.

"That 's just what I was thinking," said Mrs. Grantly. And thus things at the rectory got themselves arranged.

On the Sunday morning the expected letter from Venice came to hand, and was read on that morning very anxiously, not only by Mrs. Grantly and the

major, but by the archdeacon also, in spite of the sanctity of the day. Indeed, the archdeacon had been very stoutly anti-sabbatarial when the question of stopping the Sunday post to Plumstead had been mooted in the village, giving those who on that occasion were the special friends of the postman to understand that he considered them to be numskulls, and little better than idiots. The postman, finding the parson to be against him, had seen that there was no chance for him, and had allowed the matter to drop. Mrs. Arabin's letter was long and eager, and full of repetitions, but it did explain clearly to them the exact manner in which the cheque had found its way into Mr. Crawley's hand. "Francis came up to me," she said in her letter,—Francis being her husband, the dean,—"and asked me for the money, which I had promised to make up in a packet. The packet was not ready, and he would not wait, declaring that Mr. Crawley was in such a flurry that he did not like to leave him. I was therefore to bring it down to the door. I went to my desk, and thinking that I could spare the twenty pounds as well as the fifty, I put the cheque into the envelope, together with the notes, and handed the packet to Francis at the door. I think I told Francis afterwards that I put seventy pounds into the envelope, instead of fifty, but of this I will not be sure. *At any rate, Mr. Crawley got Mr. Soames's cheque from me.*" These last words she underscored, and then went on to explain how the cheque had been paid to her a short time before by Dan Stringer.

"Then Toogood has been right about the fellow," said the archdeacon.

"I hope they 'll hang him," said Mrs. Grantly.

"He must have known all the time what dreadful misery he was bringing upon this unfortunate family."

"I don't suppose Dan Stringer cared much about that," said the major.

"Not a straw," said the archdeacon, and then all hurried off to church; and the archdeacon preached the sermon in the fabrication of which he had been interrupted by his son, and which therefore barely enabled him to turn the quarter of an hour from the giving out of his text. It was his constant practice to preach for full twenty minutes.

As Barchester lay on the direct road from Plumstead to Hogglestock, it was thought well that word should be sent to Mr. Toogood, desiring him not to come out to Plumstead on the Monday morning. Major Grantly proposed to call for him at the Dragon, and to take him on from thence to Hogglestock. "You had better take your mother's horses all through," said the archdeacon. The distance was very nearly twenty miles, and it was felt both by the mother and the son, that the archdeacon must be in a good humour when he made such a proposition as that. It was not often that the rectory carriage-horses were allowed to make long journeys. A run into Barchester and back, which altogether was under ten miles, was generally the extent of their work.

"I meant to have posted from Barchester," said the major.

"You may as well take the horses through," said the archdeacon. "Your mother will not want them. And I suppose you might as well bring your friend Toogood back to dinner. We 'll give him a bed."

"He must be a good sort of a man," said Mrs.

Grantly; "for I suppose he has done all this for love?"

"Yes; and spent a lot of money out of his own pocket too!" said the major enthusiastically. "And the joke of it is, that he has been defending Crawley in Crawley's teeth. Mr. Crawley had refused to employ counsel; but Toogood had made up his mind to have a barrister, on purpose that there might be a fuss about it in court. He thought that it would tell with the jury in Crawley's favour."

"Bring him here, and we 'll hear all about that from himself," said the archdeacon. The major, before he started, told his mother that he should call at Framley Parsonage on his way back; but he said nothing on this subject to his father.

"I 'll write to her in a day or two," said Mrs. Grantly, "and we 'll have things settled pleasantly."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CRAWLEYS ARE INFORMED.

Major Grantly made an early start, knowing that he had a long day's work before him. He had written over-night to Mr. Toogood, naming the hour at which he would reach the Dragon, and was there punctual to the moment. When the attorney came out and got into the open carriage, while the groom held the steps for him, it was plain to be seen that the respect in which he was held at the Dragon was greatly increased. It was already known that he was going to Plumstead that night, and it was partly understood that he was engaged with the Grantly and Arabin faction in defending Mr. Crawley the clergyman against the Proudie faction. Dan Stringer, who was still at the inn, as he saw his enemy get into the Plumstead carriage, felt himself to be one of the palace party, and felt that if Mrs. Proudie had only lived till after the assizes all this heavy trouble would not have befallen him. The waiter with the dirty napkin stood at the door and bowed, thinking perhaps that as the Proudie party was going down in Barchester, it might be as well to be civil to Mr. Toogood. The days of the Stringers were probably drawing to a close at the Dragon of Wantly, and there was no knowing who might be the new landlord.

Henry Grantly and the lawyer found very little to say to each other on their long way out to Hogglestock. They were thinking, probably, much of the coming interview, and hardly knew how to express their thoughts to each other. "I will not take the carriage up to the house," said the major, as they were entering the parish of Hogglestock; "particularly as the man must feed the horses." So they got out at a farm-house about half a mile from the church, where the offence of the carriage and livery-servant would be well out of Mr. Crawley's sight, and from thence walked towards the parsonage. The church, and the school close to it, lay on their way, and as they passed by the school door they heard voices within. "I 'll bet twopence he 's there," said Toogood. "They tell me he 's always either in one shop or the other. I 'll slip in and bring him out." Mr. Toogood had assumed a comfortable air, as though the day's work was to be good pastime, and even made occasional attempts at drollery. He had had his jokes about Dan Stringer, and had attempted to describe the absurdities of Mr. Crawley's visit to Bedford Row. All this would have angered the major had he not seen that it was assumed to cover something below of which Mr. Toogood was a little ashamed, but of which, as the major thought, Mr. Toogood had no cause to be ashamed. When, therefore, Toogood proposed to go into the school and bring Mr. Crawley out, as though the telling of their story would be the easiest thing in the world, the major did not stop him. Indeed, he had no plan of his own ready. His mind was too intent on the tragedy which had occurred, and which was now to be brought to a close, to enable him to

form any plan as to the best way of getting up the last scene. So Mr. Toogood, with quick and easy steps, entered the school, leaving the major still standing in the road. Mr. Crawley was in the school;—as was also Jane Crawley. "So here you are," said Toogood. "That 's fortunate. I hope I find you pretty well?"

"If I am not mistaken in the identity, my wife's relative, Mr. Toogood?" said Mr. Crawley, stepping down from his humble desk.

"Just so, my friend," said Toogood, with his hand extended; "just so; and there 's another gentleman outside who wants to have a word with you also. Perhaps you won't mind stepping out. These are the young Hogglestockians; are they?"

The young Hogglestockians stared at him, and so did Jane. Jane, who had before heard of him, did not like him at first sight, seeing that her father was clearly displeased by the tone of the visitor's address. Mr. Crawley was displeased. There was a familiarity about Mr. Toogood which made him sore, as having been exhibited before his pupils. "If you will be pleased to step out, sir, I will follow you," he said, waving his hand towards the door. "Jane, my dear, if you will remain with the children, I will return to you presently. Bobby Studge has failed in saying his Belief. You had better set him on again from the beginning. Now, Mr. Toogood." And again he waved with his hand towards the door.

"So that 's my young cousin, is it?" said Toogood, stretching over and just managing to touch Jane's fingers,—of which act of touching Jane was very chary. Then he went forth, and Mr. Crawley fol-

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lowed him. There was the major standing in the road, and Toogood was anxious to be the first to communicate the good news. It was the only reward he had proposed to himself for the money he had expended and the time he had lost and the trouble he had taken. "It 's all right, old fellow," he said, clapping his hand on Crawley's shoulder. "We 've got the right sow by the ear at last. We know all about it." Mr. Crawley could hardly remember the time when he had been called an old fellow last, and now he did not like it; nor, in the confusion of his mind, could he understand the allusion to the right sow. He supposed that Mr. Toogood had come to him about his trial, but it did not occur to him that the lawyer might be bringing him news which might make the trial altogether unnecessary. "If my eyes are not mistaken, there is my friend, Major Grantly," said Mr. Crawley.

"There he is, as large as life," said Toogood. "But stop a moment before you go to him, and give me your hand. I must have the first shake of it." Hereupon Crawley extended his hand. "That 's right. And now let me tell you we know all about the cheque,—Soames's cheque. We know where you got it. We know who stole it. We know how it came to the person who gave it to you. It 's all very well talking, but when you 're in trouble always go to a lawyer."

By this time Mr. Crawley was looking full into Mr. Toogood's face, and seeing that his cousin's eyes were streaming with tears, began to get some insight into the man's character, and also some very dim insight into the facts which the man intended to communicate

to himself. "I do not as yet fully understand you, sir," said he, "being perhaps in such matters somewhat dull of intellect; but it seemeth to me that you are a messenger of glad tidings, whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains."

"Beautiful!" said Toogood. "By George, I should think they are beautiful! Don't you hear me tell you that we have found out all about the cheque, and that you 're as right as a trivet?" They were still on the little causeway leading from the school up to the road, and Henry Grantly was waiting for them at the small wicket-gate. "Mr. Crawley," said the major, "I congratulate you with all my heart. I could not but accompany my friend, Mr. Toogood, when he brought you this good news."

"I do not even yet altogether comprehend what has been told to me," said Crawley, now standing out on the road between the other two men. "I am doubtless dull,—very dull. May I beg some clearer word of explanation before I ask you to go with me to my wife?"

"The cheque was given to you by my aunt Eleanor."

"Your aunt Eleanor!" said Crawley, now altogether in the clouds. Who was the major's aunt Eleanor? Though he had, no doubt, at different times heard all the circumstances of the connection, he had never realised the fact that his daughter's lover was the nephew of his old friend, Arabin.

"Yes; by my aunt, Mrs. Arabin."

"She put it into the envelope with the notes," said Toogood;—"slipped it in without saying a word to any one. I never heard of a woman doing such a

mad thing in my life before. If she had died, or if we had n't caught her, where should we all have been? Not but what I think I should have run Dan Stringer to ground too, and worked it out of him."

"Then, after all, it was given to me by the dean?" said Crawley, drawing himself up.

"It was in the envelope, but the dean did not know it," said the major.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Crawley, "I was sure of it. I knew it. Weak as my mind may be,—and at times it is very weak,—I was certain that I could not have erred in such a matter. The more I struggled with my memory, the more fixed with me became the fact, —which I had forgotten but for a moment,—that the document had formed a part of that small packet handed to me by the dean. But look you, sirs,—bear with me yet for a moment. I said that it was so, and the dean denied it."

"The dean did not know it, man," said Toogood, almost in a passion.

"Bear with me yet a while. So far have I been from misdoubting the dean,—whom I have long known to be in all things a true and honest gentleman,—that I postponed the elaborated result of my own memory to his word. And I felt myself the more constrained to do this, because, in a moment of forgetfulness, in the wantonness of inconsiderate haste, with wicked thoughtlessness, I had allowed myself to make a false statement,—unwittingly false, indeed, nathless very false, unpardonably false. I had declared, without thinking, that the money had come to me from the hands of Mr. Soames, thereby seeming to cast a reflection upon that gentleman. When I had been guilty

of so great a blunder, of so gross a violation of that ordinary care which should govern all words between man and man, especially when any question of money may be in doubt,—how could I expect that any one should accept my statement when contravened by that made by the dean? How, in such an embarrassment, could I believe my own memory? Gentlemen, I did not believe my own memory. Though all the little circumstances of that envelope, with its rich but perilous freightage, came back upon me from time to time with an exactness that has appeared to me to be almost marvellous, yet I have told myself that it was not so! Gentlemen, if you please, we will go into the house; my wife is there, and should no longer be left in suspense." They passed on in silence for a few steps, till Crawley spoke again. "Perhaps you will allow me the privilege to be alone with her for one minute,—but for a minute? Her thanks shall not be delayed, where thanks are so richly due."

"Of course," said Toogood, wiping his eyes with a large red bandana handkerchief. "By all means. We 'll take a little walk. Come along, major." The major had turned his face away, and he also was weeping. "By George! I never heard such a thing in all my life," said Toogood. "I would n't have believed it if I had n't seen it. I would n't, indeed. If I were to tell that up in London, nobody would believe me."

"I call that man a hero," said Grantly.

"I don't know about being a hero. I never quite knew what makes a hero, if it is n't having three or four girls dying in love for you at once. But to find a man who was going to let everything in the world

go against him, because he believed another fellow better than himself! There 's many a chap thinks another man is wool-gathering; but this man has thought he was wool-gathering himself! It 's not natural; and the world would n't go on if there were many like that. He 's beckoning, and we had better go in."

Mr. Toogood went first, and the major followed him. When they entered the front door they saw the skirt of a woman's dress flitting away through the door at the end of the passage, and on entering the room to the left, they found Mr. Crawley alone. "She has fled, as though from an enemy," he said, with a little attempt at a laugh; "but I will pursue her, and bring her back."

"No, Crawley, no," said the lawyer. "She 's a little upset, and all that kind of thing. We know what women are. Let her alone."

"Nay, Mr. Toogood; but then she would be angered with herself afterwards, and would lack the comfort of having spoken a word of gratitude. Pardon me, Major Grantly; but I would not have you leave us till she has seen you. It is as her cousin says. She is somewhat over-excited. But still it will be best that she should see you. Gentlemen, you will excuse me."

Then he went out to fetch his wife, and while he was away not a word was spoken. The major looked out of one window and Mr. Toogood out of the other, and they waited patiently till they heard the coming steps of the husband and wife. When the door was opened, Mr. Crawley appeared, leading his wife by the hand. "My dear," he said, "you know Major Grantly. This is your cousin, Mr. Toogood. It is well that you

know him too, and remember his great kindness to us." But Mrs. Crawley could not speak. She could only sink on the sofa, and hide her face, while she strove in vain to repress her sobs. She had been very strong through all her husband's troubles,—very strong in bearing for him what he could not bear for himself, and in fighting on his behalf battles in which he was altogether unable to couch a lance; but the endurance of so many troubles, and the great overwhelming sorrow at last, had so nearly overpowered her, that she could not sustain the shock of this turn in their fortunes. "She was never like this, sirs, when ill news came to us," said Mr. Crawley, standing somewhat apart from her.

The major sat himself by her side, and put his hand upon hers, and whispered some word to her about her daughter. Upon this she threw her arms around him, and kissed his face, and then his hands, and then looked up into his face through her tears. She murmured some few words, or attempted to do so. I doubt whether the major understood their meaning, but he knew very well what was in her heart.

"And now I think we might as well be moving," said Mr. Toogood. "I 'll see about having the indictment quashed. I 'll arrange all that with Walker. It may be necessary that you should go into Barchester the first day the judges sit; and if so, I 'll come and fetch you. You may be sure I won't leave the place till it 's all square."

As they were going, Grantly,—speaking now altogether with indifference as to Toogood's presence,—asked Mr. Crawley's leave to be the bearer of these tidings to his daughter.

"She can hear it in no tones that can be more grateful to her," said Mr. Crawley.

"I shall ask her for nothing for myself now," said Grantly. "It would be ungenerous. But hereafter,—in a few days,—when she shall be more at ease, may I then use your permission——?"

"Major Grantly," said Mr. Crawley solemnly, "I respect you so highly, and esteem you so thoroughly, that I give willingly that which you ask. If my daughter can bring herself to regard you as a woman should regard her husband, with the love that can worship and cling and be constant, she will, I think, have a fair promise of worldly happiness. And for you, sir, in giving to you my girl,—if so it be that she is given to you,—I shall bestow upon you a great treasure." Had Grace been a king's daughter, with a queen's dowry, the permission to address her could not have been imparted to her lover with a more thorough appreciation of the value of the privilege conferred.

"He is a rum 'un," said Mr. Toogood, as they got into the carriage together; "but they say he 's a very good 'un to go."

After their departure Jane was sent for, that she might hear the family news; and when she expressed some feeling not altogether in favour of Mr. Toogood, Mr. Crawley thus strove to correct her views. "He is a man, my dear, who conceals a warm heart, and an active spirit, and healthy sympathies, under an affected jocularity of manner, and almost with a touch of assumed vulgarity. But when the jewel itself is good any fault in the casket may be forgiven."

"Then, papa, the next time I see him I 'll like him,—if I can," said Jane.

The village of Framley lies slightly off the road from Hogglestock to Barchester,—so much so as to add perhaps a mile to the journey if the traveller goes by the parsonage gate. On their route to Hogglestock our two travellers had passed Framley without visiting the village, but on the return journey the major asked Mr. Toogood's permission to make the deviation. "I 'm not in a hurry," said Toogood. "I never was more comfortable in my life. I 'll just light a cigar while you go in and see your friends." Toogood lit his cigar, and the major, getting down from the carriage, entered the parsonage. It was his fortune to find Grace alone. Robarts was in Barchester, and Mrs. Robarts was across the road, at Lufton Court. "Miss Crawley was certainly in," the servant told him, and he soon found himself in Miss Crawley's presence.

"I have only called to tell you the news about your father," said he.

"What news?"

"We have just come from Hogglestock,—your cousin, Mr. Toogood, that is, and myself. They have found out all about the cheque. My aunt, Mrs. Arabin, the dean's wife, you know,—she gave it to your father."

"Oh, Major Grantly!"

"It seems so easily settled, does it not?"

"And is it settled?"

"Yes; everything. Everything about that." Now he had hold of her hand as if he were going. "Goodbye. I told your father that I would just call and tell you."

"It seems almost more than I can believe."

"You may believe it; indeed you may." He still

held her hand. "You will write to your mother, I dare say, to-night. Tell her I was here. Good-bye now."

"Good-bye," she said. Her hand was still in his, as she looked up into his face.

"Dear, dear, dearest Grace! My darling Grace!" Then he took her into his arms and kissed her, and went his way without another word, feeling that he had kept his word to her father like a gentleman. Grace, when she was left alone, thought that she was the happiest girl in Christendom. If she could only get to her mother, and tell everything, and be told everything! She had no idea of any promise that her lover might have made to her father, nor did she make inquiry of her own thoughts as to his reasons for staying with her so short a time; but looking back at it all she thought his conduct had been perfect.

In the mean time the major, with Mr. Toogood, was driven home to dinner at Barchester.

CHAPTER XX.

MADALINA'S HEART IS BLEEDING.

JOHN EAMES, as soon as he had left Mrs. Arabin at the hotel, and had taken his travelling-bag to his own lodgings, started off for his uncle Toogood's house. There he found Mrs. Toogood, not in the most serene state of mind as to her husband's absence. Mr. Toogood had now been at Barchester for the best part of a week,—spending a good deal of money at the inn. Mrs. Toogood was quite sure that he must be doing that. Indeed, how could he help himself? Johnny remarked that he did not see how in such circumstances his uncle was to help himself. And then Mr. Toogood had only written one short scrap of a letter, —just three words, and they were written in triumph. "Crawley is all right, and I think I 've got the real Simon Pure by the heels." "It 's all very well, John," Mrs. Toogood said; "and of course it would be a terrible thing to the family if anybody connected with it were made out to be a thief."

"It would be quite dreadful," said Johnny.

"Not that I ever looked upon the Crawleys as connections of ours. But, however, let that pass. I 'm sure I 'm very glad that your uncle should have been able to be of service to them. But there 's reason in the roasting of eggs, and I can tell you that money is

not so plenty in this house that your uncle can afford to throw it into the Barchester gutters. Think what twelve children are, John. It might be all very well if Toogood were a bachelor, and if some lord had left him a fortune."

John Eames did not stay very long in Tavistock Square. His cousins Polly and Lucy were gone to the play with Mr. Summerkin, and his aunt was not in one of her best humours. He took his uncle's part as well as he could, and then left Mrs. Toogood. The little allusion to Lord De Guest's generosity had not been pleasant to him. It seemed to rob him of all his own merit. He had been rather proud of his journey to Italy, having contrived to spend nearly forty pounds in ten days. He had done everything in the most expensive way, feeling that every napoleon wasted had been laid out on behalf of Mr. Crawley. But, as Mrs. Toogood had just told him, all this was nothing to what Toogood was doing. Toogood with twelve children was living at his own charges at Barchester, and was neglecting his business besides. "There 's Mr. Crump," said Mrs. Toogood. "Of course he does n't like it, and what can I say to him when he comes to me?" This was not quite fair on the part of Mrs. Toogood, as Mr. Crump had not troubled her even once as yet since her husband's departure.

What was Johnny to do when he left Tavistock Square? His club was open to him. Should he go to his club, play a game of billiards, and have some supper? When he asked himself the question he knew that he would not go to his club, and yet he pretended to doubt about it, as he made his way to a cabstand in Tottenham Court Road. It would be slow, he told

himself, to go to his club. He would have gone to see Lily Dale, only that his intimacy with Mrs. Thorne was not sufficient to justify his calling at her house between nine and ten o'clock at night. But, as he must go somewhere,—and as his intimacy with Lady Demolines was, he thought, sufficient to justify almost anything,—he would go to Bayswater. I regret to say that he had written a mysterious note from Paris to Madalina Demolines, saying that he should be in London on this very night, and that it was just on the cards that he might make his way up to Porchester Terrace before he went to bed. The note was mysterious, because it had neither beginning nor ending. It did not contain even initials. It was written like a telegraph message, and was about as long. It was the kind of thing Miss Demolines liked, Johnny thought; and there could be no reason why he should not gratify her. It was her favourite game. Some people like whist, some like croquet, and some like intrigue. Madalina would probably have called it romance,—because by nature she was romantic. John, who was made of sterner stuff, laughed at this. He knew that there was no romance in it. He knew that he was only amusing himself, and gratifying her at the same time, by a little innocent pretence. He told himself that it was his nature to prefer the society of women to that of men. He would have liked the society of Lily Dale, no doubt, much better than that of Miss Demolines; but as the society of Lily Dale was not to be had at that moment, the society of Miss Demolines was the best substitute within his reach. So he got into a cab and had himself driven to Porchester Terrace. "Is Lady Demolines at home?" he said to the servant. He

always asked for Lady Demolines. But the page who was accustomed to open the door for him was less false, being young, and would now tell him, without any further fiction, that Miss Madalina was in the drawing-room. Such was the answer he got from the page on this evening. What Madalina did with her mother on these occasions he had never yet discovered. There used to be some little excuses given about Lady Demolines' state of health, but latterly Madalina had discontinued her references to her mother's head-aches. She was standing in the centre of the drawing-room when he entered it, with both her hands raised, and an almost terrible expression of mystery in her face. Her hair, however, had been very carefully arranged so as to fall with copious carelessness down her shoulders, and altogether she was looking her best. "Oh, John," she said. She called him John by accident in the tumult of the moment. "Have you heard what has happened? But of course you have heard it."

"Heard what? I have heard nothing," said Johnny, arrested almost in the doorway by the nature of the question,—and partly also, no doubt, by the tumult of the moment. He had no idea how terrible a tragedy was in truth in store for him; but he perceived that the moment was to be tumultuous, and that he must carry himself accordingly.

"Come in, and close the door," she said. He came in and closed the door. "Do you mean to say that you have n't heard what has happened in Hook Court?"

"No;—what has happened in Hook Court?" Miss Demolines threw herself back into an arm-chair, closed

her eyes, and clasped both her hands upon her forehead. "What has happened in Hook Court?" said Johnny, walking up to her.

"I do not think I can bring myself to tell you," she answered.

Then he took one of her hands down from her forehead and held it in his,—which she allowed passively. She was thinking, no doubt, of something far different from that.

"I never saw you looking better in my life," said Johnny.

"Don't," said she. "How can you talk in that way, when my heart is bleeding,—bleeding." Then she pulled away her hand, and again clasped it with the other upon her forehead.

"But why is your heart bleeding? What has happened in Hook Court?" Still she answered nothing, but she sobbed violently, and the heaving of her bosom showed how tumultuous was the tumult within it. "You don't mean to say that Dobbs Broughton has come to grief;—that he 's to be sold out?"

"Man," said Madalina, jumping from her chair, standing at her full height, and stretching out both her arms, "he has destroyed himself!" The revelation was at last made with so much tragic propriety, in so excellent a tone, and with such an absence of all the customary redundances of commonplace relation, that I think that she must have rehearsed the scene,—either with her mother or with the page. Then there was a minute's silence, during which she did not move even an eyelid. She held her outstretched hands without dropping a finger half an inch. Her face was thrust forward, her chin projecting, with tragic horror; but there

was no vacillation even in her chin. She did not wink an eye, or alter to the breadth of a hair the aperture of her lips. Surely she was a great genius if she did it all without previous rehearsal. Then, before he had thought of words in which to answer her, she let her hands fall by her side, she closed her eyes, and shook her head, and fell back again into her chair. "It is too horrible to be spoken of,—to be thought about," she said. "I could not have brought myself to tell the tale to a living being,—except to you."

This would naturally have been flattering to Johnny had it not been that he was in truth absorbed by the story which he had heard.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that Broughton has—committed suicide?" She could not speak of it again, but nodded her head at him thrice, while her eyes were still closed. "And how was the manner of it?" said he, asking the question in a low voice. He could not even as yet quite bring himself to believe it. Madalina was so fond of a little playful intrigue, that even this story might have something in it of the nature of fiction. He was not quite sure of the facts, and yet he was shocked by what he had heard.

"Would you have me repeat to you all the bloody details of that terrible scene?" she said. "It is impossible. Go to your friend Dalrymple. He will tell you. He knows it all. He has been with Maria all through. I wish,—I wish it had not been so." But nevertheless she did bring herself to narrate all the details with something more of circumstance than Eames desired. She soon succeeded in making him understand that the tragedy of Hook Court was a reality, and that poor Dobbs Broughton had brought his career to an

untimely end. She had heard everything,—having indeed gone to Musselboro in the City, and having penetrated even to the sanctum of Mr. Bangles. To Mr. Bangles she had explained that she was bosom-friend of the widow of the unfortunate man, and that it was her miserable duty to make herself the mistress of all the circumstances. Mr. Bangles,—the reader may remember him, Burton and Bangles, who kept the stores for Himalaya wines at *22s. 6d.* the dozen, in Hook Court,—was a bachelor, and rather liked the visit, and told Miss Demolines very freely all he had seen. And when she suggested that it might be expedient for the sake of the family that she should come back to Mr. Bangles for further information at a subsequent period, he very politely assured her that she would "do him proud," whenever she might please to call in Hook Court. And then he saw her into Lombard Street, and put her into an omnibus. She was therefore well qualified to tell Johnny all the particulars of the tragedy,—and she did so far overcome her horror as to tell them all. She told her tale somewhat after the manner of Æneas, not forgetting the "quorum pars magna fui." "I feel that it almost makes an old woman of me," said she when she had finished.

"No," said Johnny, remonstrating;—"not that."

"But it does. To have been concerned in so terrible a tragedy takes more of life out of one than years of tranquil existence." As she had told him nothing of her intercourse with Bangles,—with Bangles, who had literally picked the poor wretch up,—he did not see how she herself had been concerned in the matter; but he said nothing about that, knowing the character of his Madalina. "I shall see—that—body—floating

before my eyes while I live," she said, "and the gory wound, and,—and——"

"Don't," said Johnny, recoiling in truth from the picture, by which he was revolted.

"Never again," she said; "never again! But you forced it from me, and now I shall not close my eyes for a week."

She then became very comfortably confidential, and discussed the affairs of poor Mrs. Dobbs Broughton with a great deal of satisfaction. "I went to see her, of course, but she sent me down word to say that the shock would be too much for her. I do not wonder that she should not see me. Poor Maria! She came to me for advice, you know, when Dobbs Broughton first proposed to her; and I was obliged to tell her what I really thought. I knew her character so well! 'Dear Maria,' I said, 'if you think that you can love him, take him!' 'I think I can,' she replied. 'But,' said I, 'make yourself quite sure about the business.' And how has it turned out? She never loved him. What heart she has she has given to that wretched Dalrymple."

"I don't see that he is particularly wretched," said Johnny, pleading for his friend.

"He is wretched, and so you 'll find. She gave him her heart after giving her hand to poor Dobbs; and as for the business, there is n't as much left as will pay for her mourning. I don't wonder that she could not bring herself to see me."

"And what has become of the business?"

"It belongs to Mrs. Van Siever,—to her and Musselboro. Poor Broughton had some little money, and it has gone among them. Musselboro, who never had

a penny, will be a rich man. Of coursé you know he is going to marry Clara?"

"Nonsense!"

"I always told you that it would be so. And now you may perhaps acknowledge that Conway Dalrymple's prospects are not very brilliant. I hope he likes being cut out by Mr. Musselboro? Of course he will have to marry Maria. I do not see how he can escape. Indeed, she is too good for him;—only after such a marriage as that, there would be an end to all his prospects as an artist. The best thing for them would be to go to New Zealand."

John Eames certainly liked these evenings with Miss Demolines. He sat at his ease in a comfortable chair and amused himself by watching her different little plots. And then she had bright eyes, and she flattered him, and allowed him to scold her occasionally. And now and again there might be some more potent attraction, when she would admit him to take her hand,—or the like. It was better than to sit smoking with men at the club. But he could not sit all night even with Madalina Demolines, and at eleven he got up to take his leave. "When shall you see Miss Dale?" she asked him suddenly.

"I do not know," he answered, frowning at her. He always frowned at her when she spoke to him of Miss Dale.

"I do not in the least care for your frowns," she said, playfully, putting up her hands to smooth his brows. "I think I know you intimately enough to name your goddess to you."

"She is n't my goddess."

"A very cold goddess, I should think, from what

I hear. I wish to ask you for a promise respecting her."

"What promise?"

"Will you grant it me?"

"How can I tell till I hear?"

"You must promise me not to speak of me to her when you see her."

"But why must I promise that?"

"Promise me."

"Not unless you tell me why." Johnny had already assured himself that nothing could be more improbable than that he should mention the name of Miss Demolines to Lily Dale.

"Very well, sir. Then you may go. And I must say that unless you can comply with so slight a request as that, I shall not care to see you here again. Mr. Eames, why should you want to speak evil of me to Miss Dale?"

"I do not want to speak evil of you."

"I know that you could not speak of me to her without at least ridicule. Come, promise me. You shall come here on Thursday evening, and I will tell you why I have asked you."

"Tell me now."

She hesitated a moment, and then shook her head. "No. I cannot tell you now. My heart is still bleeding with the memory of that poor man's fate. I will not tell you now. And yet it is now that you must give me the promise. Will you not trust me so far as that?"

"I will not speak of you to Miss Dale."

"There is my own friend! And now, John, mind you are here at half-past eight on Thursday. Punc-

tually at half-past eight. There is a thing I have to tell you, which I will tell you then if you will come. I had thought to have told you to-day."

"And why not now?"

"I cannot. My feelings are too many for me. I should never go through with it after all that has passed between us about poor Broughton. I should break down; indeed I should. Go now, for I am tired." Then, having probably taken a momentary advantage of that more potent attraction to which we have before alluded, he left the room very suddenly.

He left the room very suddenly because Madalina's movements had been so sudden, and her words so full of impulse. He had become aware that in this little game which he was playing in Porchester Terrace everything ought to be done after some unaccustomed and special fashion. So,—having clasped Madalina for one moment in his arms,—he made a rush at the room door, and was out on the landing in a second. He was a little too quick for old Lady Demolines, the skirt of whose night-dress,—as it seemed to Johnny,—he saw whisking away, in at another door. It was nothing, however, to him if old Lady Demolines, who was always too ill to be seen, chose to roam about her own house in her night-dress.

When he found himself alone in the street, his mind reverted to Dobbs Broughton and the fate of the wretched man, and he sauntered slowly down Palace Gardens, that he might look at the house in which he had dined with a man who had destroyed himself by his own hands. He stood for a moment looking up at the windows, in which there was now no light, thinking of the poor woman whom he had seen in the midst of

luxury, and who was now left a widow in such miserable circumstances! As for the suggestion that his friend Conway would marry her, he did not believe it for a moment. He knew too well what the suggestions of his Madalina were worth, and the motives from which they sprung. But he thought it might be true that Mrs. Van Siever had absorbed all there was of property, and possibly, also, that Musselboro was to marry her daughter. At any rate, he would go to Dalrymple's rooms, and if he could find him, would learn the truth. He knew enough of Dalrymple's ways of life, and of the ways of his friend's chambers and studio, to care nothing for the lateness of the hour, and in a very few minutes he was sitting in Dalrymple's arm-chair. He found Siph Dunn there, smoking in unperturbed tranquillity, and as long as that lasted he could ask no questions about Mrs. Broughton. He told them, therefore, of his adventures abroad, and of Crawley's escape. But at last, having finished his third pipe, Siph Dunn took his leave.

"Tell me," said John, as soon as Dunn had closed the door, "what is this I hear about Dobbs Broughton?"

"He has blown his brains out. That is all."

"How terribly shocking!"

"Yes; it shocked us all at first. We are used to it now."

"And the business?"

"That had gone to the dogs. They say at least that his share of it had done so."

"And he was ruined?"

"They say so. That is, Musselboro says so, and Mrs. Van Siever."

"And what do you say, Conway?"

"The less I say the better. I have my hopes,—only you 're such a talkative fellow, one can't trust you."

"I never told any secret of yours, old fellow."

"Well;—the fact is, I have an idea that something may be saved for the poor woman. I think that they are wronging her. Of course all I can do is to put the matter into a lawyer's hands, and pay the lawyer's bill. So I went to your cousin, and he has taken the case up. I hope he won't ruin me."

"Then I suppose you are quarrelling with Mrs. Van?"

"That does n't matter. She has quarrelled with me."

"And what about Jael, Conway? They tell me that Jael is going to become Mrs. Musselboro."

"Who has told you that?"

"A bird."

"Yes; I know who the bird is. I don't think that Jael will become Mrs. Musselboro. I don't think that Jael would become Mrs. Musselboro, if Jael were the only woman and Musselboro the only man in London. To tell you a little bit of secret, Johnny, I think that Jael will become the wife of one Conway Dalrymple. That is my opinion; and as far as I can judge, it is the opinion of Jael also."

"But not the opinion of Mrs. Van. The bird told me another thing, Conway."

"What was the other thing?"

"The bird hinted that all this would end in your marrying the widow of that poor wretch who destroyed himself."

"Johnny, my boy," said the artist, after a moment's

silence, "if I give you a bit of advice, will you profit by it?"

"I 'll try, if it 's not disagreeable."

"Whether you profit by it, or whether you do not, keep it to yourself. I know the bird better than you do, and I strongly caution you to beware of the bird. The bird is a bird of prey, and altogether an unclean bird. The bird wants a mate, and does n't much care how she finds one. And the bird wants money, and does n't much care how she gets it. The bird is a decidedly bad bird, and not at all fit to take the place of domestic hen in a decent farm-yard. In plain English, Johnny, you 'll find some day, if you go over too often to Porchester Terrace, either that you are going to marry the bird, or else that you are employing your cousin Toogood for your defence in an action for breach of promise, brought against you by that venerable old bird, the bird's mamma."

"If it 's to be either, it will be the latter," said Johnny, as he took up his hat to go away.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I THINK HE IS LIGHT OF HEART."

Mrs. Arabin remained one day in town. Mr. Toogood, in spite of his asseveration that he would not budge from Barchester till he had seen Mr. Crawley through all his troubles, did run up to London as soon as the news reached him that John Eames had returned. He came up and took Mrs. Arabin's deposition, which he sent down to Mr. Walker. It might still be necessary, Mrs. Arabin was told, that she should go into court, and there state on oath that she had given the cheque to Mr. Crawley; but Mr. Walker was of opinion that the circumstances would enable the judge to call upon the grand jury not to find a true bill against Mr. Crawley, and that the whole affair, as far as Mr. Crawley was concerned, would thus be brought to an end. Toogood was still very anxious to place Dan Stringer in the dock, but Mr. Walker declared that they would fail if they made the attempt. Dan had been examined before the magistrates at Barchester, and had persisted in his statement that he had heard nothing about Mr. Crawley and the cheque. This he said in the teeth of the words which had fallen from him unawares in the presence of Mr. Toogood. But they could not punish him for a lie,—not even for

such a lie as that! He was not upon oath, and they could not make him responsible to the law because he had held his tongue upon a matter as to which it was manifest to them all that he had known the whole history during the entire period of Mr. Crawley's persecution. They could only call upon him to account for his possession of the cheque, and this he did by saying it had been paid to him by Jem Scuttle, who received all moneys appertaining to the hotel stables, and accounted for them once a week. Jem Scuttle had simply told him that he had taken the cheque from Mr. Soames, and Jem had since gone to New Zealand. It was quite true that Jem's departure had followed suspiciously close upon the payment of the rent to Mrs. Arabin, and that Jem had been in close amity with Dan Stringer up to the moment of his departure. That Dan Stringer had not become honestly possessed of the cheque, everybody knew; but, nevertheless, the magistrates were of opinion, Mr. Walker coinciding with them, that there was no evidence against him sufficient to secure a conviction. The story, however, of Mr. Crawley's injuries was so well known in Barchester, and the feeling against the man who had permitted him to be thus injured was so strong, that Dan Stringer did not altogether escape without punishment. Some rough spirits in Barchester called one night at the Dragon of Wantly, and begged that Mr. Dan Stringer would be kind enough to come out and take a walk with them that evening; and when it was intimated to them that Dan Stringer had not just then any desire for such exercise, they requested to be allowed to go into the back-parlour and make an evening with Dan Stringer in that recess. There was a

terrible row at the Dragon of Wantly that night, and Dan with difficulty was rescued by the police. On the following morning he was smuggled out of Barchester by an early train, and has never more been seen in that city. Rumours of him, however, were soon heard, from which it appeared that he had made himself acquainted with the casual ward of more than one workhouse in London. His cousin John left the inn almost immediately,—as, indeed, he must have done had there been no question of Mr. Soames's cheque,—and then there was nothing more heard of the Stringers in Barchester.

Mrs. Arabin remained in town one day, and would have remained longer, waiting for her husband, had not a letter from her sister impressed upon her that it might be as well that she should be with their father as soon as possible. "I don't mean to make you think that there is any immediate danger," Mrs. Grantly said, "and, indeed, we cannot say that he is ill; but it seems that the extremity of old age has come upon him almost suddenly, and that he is as weak as a child. His only delight is with the children, especially with Posy, whose gravity in her management of him is wonderful. He has not left his room now for more than a week, and he eats very little. It may be that he will live yet for years; but I should be deceiving you if I did not let you know that both the archdeacon and I think that the time of his departure from us is near at hand." After reading this letter, Mrs. Arabin could not wait in town for her husband, even though he was expected in two days, and though she had been told that her presence at Barchester was not immediately required on behalf of Mr. Crawley.

But during that one day she kept her promise to John Eames by going to Lily Dale. Mrs. Arabin had become very fond of Johnny, and felt that he deserved the prize which he had been so long trying to win. The reader, perhaps, may not agree with Mrs. Arabin. The reader, who may have caught a closer insight into Johnny's character than Mrs. Arabin had obtained, may, perhaps, think that a young man who could amuse himself with Miss Demolines was unworthy of Lily Dale. If so, I may declare for myself that I and the reader are not in accord about John Eames. It is hard to measure worth and worthlessness in such matters, as there is no standard for such measurement. My old friend John was certainly no hero,—was very unheroic in many phases of his life; but then, if all the girls are to wait for heroes, I fear that the difficulties in the way of matrimonial arrangements, great as they are at present, will be very seriously enhanced. Johnny was not ecstatic, nor heroic, nor transcendental, nor very beautiful in his manliness; he was not a man to break his heart for love, or to have his story written in an epic; but he was an affectionate, kindly, honest young man; and I think most girls might have done worse than take him. Whether he was wise to ask assistance in his love-making so often as he had done, that may be another question.

Mrs. Arabin was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Thorne, and therefore there was nothing odd in her going to Mrs. Thorne's house. Mrs. Thorne was very glad to see her, and told her all the Barsetshire news, —much more than Mrs. Arabin would have learned in a week at the deanery; for Mrs. Thorne had a marvellous gift of picking up news. She had already

heard the whole story of Mr. Soames's cheque, and expressed her conviction that the least that could be done in amends to Mr. Crawley was to make him a bishop. "And you see the palace is vacant," said Mrs. Thorne.

"The palace vacant!" said Mrs. Arabin.

"It is just as good. Now that Mrs. Proudie has gone I don't suppose the poor bishop will count for much. I can assure you, Mrs. Arabin, I felt that poor woman's death so much! She used to regard me as one of the staunchest of the Proudieites! She once whispered to me such a delightfully wicked story about the dean and the archdeacon. When I told her that they were my particular friends, she put on a look of horror. But I don't think she believed me." Then Emily Dunstable entered the room, and with her came Lily Dale. Mrs. Arabin had never before seen Lily, and of course they were introduced.

"I am sorry to say Miss Dale is going home to Allington to-morrow," said Emily.

"But she is coming to Chaldicotes in May," said Mrs. Thorne. "Of course, Mrs. Arabin, you know what gala doings we are going to have in May?" Then there were various civil little speeches made on each side, and Mrs. Arabin expressed a wish that she might meet Miss Dale again in Barsetshire. But all this did not bring her at all nearer to her object.

"I particularly wish to say a word to Miss Dale,—here to-day, if she will allow me," said Mrs. Arabin.

"I 'm sure she will,—twenty words; won't you, Lily?" said Mrs. Thorne, preparing to leave the room. Then Mrs. Arabin apologised, and Mrs. Thorne, bustling up, said that it did not signify, and Lily, remaining

quite still on the sofa, wondered what it was all about, —and in two minutes Lily and Mrs. Arabin were alone together.

"I am afraid, Miss Dale, you will think me very impertinent," said Mrs. Arabin.

"I am sure I shall not think that," said Lily.

"I believe you knew, before Mr. Eames started, that he was going to Italy to find me and my husband?" said Mrs. Arabin. Then Lily put Mr. Crosbie altogether out of her head, and became aware that he was not to be the subject of the coming conversation. She was almost sorry that it was so. There was no doubt in her mind as to what she would have said to any one who might have taken up Crosbie's cause. On that matter she could now have given a very decisive answer in a few words. But on that other matter she was much more in doubt. She remembered, however, every word of the note she had received from M. D. She remembered also the words of John's note to that young woman. And her heart was still hard against him.

"Yes," she said, "Mr. Eames came here one night and told us why he was going. I was very glad that he was going, because I thought it was right."

"You know, of course, how successful he has been? It was I who gave the cheque to Mr. Crawley."

"So Mrs. Thorne has heard. Dr. Thorne has written to tell her the whole story."

"And now I 've come to look for Mr. Eames's reward."

"His reward, Mrs. Arabin?"

"Yes; or rather to plead for him. You will not, I hope, be angry with him because he has told me much

of his history while we were travelling home alone together."

"Oh, no," said Lily, smiling. "How could he have chosen a better friend in whom to trust?"

"He could certainly have chosen none who would take his part more sincerely. He is so good and so amiable! He is so pleasant in his ways, and so fitted to make a woman happy! And then, Miss Dale, he is also so devoted!"

"He is an old friend of ours, Mrs. Arabin."

"So he has told me."

"And we all of us love him dearly. Mamma is very much attached to him."

"Unless he flatters himself, there is no one belonging to you who would not wish that he should be nearer and dearer still."

"It may be so. I do not say that it is not so. Mamma and my uncle are both fond of him."

"And does not that go a long way?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"It ought not to do so," said Lily. "It ought not to go any way at all."

"Ought it not? It seems to me that I could never have brought myself to marry any one whom my old friends had not liked."

"Ah! that is another thing."

"But is it not a recommendation to a man that he has been so successful with your friends as to make them all feel that you might trust yourself to him with perfect safety?" To this Lily made no answer, and Mrs. Arabin went on to plead her friend's cause with all the eloquence she could use, insisting on all his virtues, his good temper, his kindness, his constancy,—

and not forgetting the fact that the world was inclined to use him very well. Still Lily made no answer. She had promised Mrs. Arabin that she would not regard her interference as impertinent, and therefore she refrained from any word that might seem to show offence. Nor did she feel offence. It was something gained by John Eames in Lily's estimation that he should have such a friend as Mrs. Arabin to take an interest in his welfare. But there was a self-dependence, perhaps one may call it an obstinacy, about Lily Dale which made her determined that she would not be driven hither or thither by any pressure from without. Why had John Eames, at the very moment when he should have been doing his best to drive from her breast the memory of past follies,—when he would have striven to do so had he really been earnest in his suit,—why at such a moment had he allowed himself to correspond in terms of affection with such a woman as this M. D.? While Mrs. Arabin was pleading for John Eames, Lily was repeating to herself certain words which John had written to the woman—"Ever and always yours unalterably." Such were not the exact words, but such was the form in which Lily, dishonestly, chose to repeat them to herself. And why was it so with her? In the old days she would have forgiven Crosbie any offence at a word or a look,—any possible letter to any M. D., let her have been ever so abominable! Nay,—had she not even forgiven him the offence of deserting herself altogether on behalf of a woman as detestable as could be any M. D. of Johnny's choosing;—a woman whose only recommendation had been her title? And yet she would not forgive John Eames, though the evidence

against him was of so flimsy a nature,—but rather strove to turn the flimsiness of that evidence into strength! Why was it so? Unheroic as he might be, John Eames was surely a better man and a bigger man than Adolphus Crosbie. It was simply this;—she had fallen in love with the one, and had never fallen in love with the other! She had fallen in love with the one man, though in her simple way she had made a struggle against such feeling; and she had not come to love the other man, though she had told herself that it would be well that she should do so if it were possible. Again and again she had half declared to herself that she would take him as her husband and leave the love to come afterwards; but when the moment came for doing so, she could not do it.

"May I not say a word of comfort to him?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"He will be very comfortable without any such word," said Lily, laughing.

"But he is not comfortable; of that you may be very sure." "Yours ever and unalterably, J. E.," said Lily to herself. "You do not doubt his affection?" continued Mrs. Arabin.

"I neither doubt it nor credit it."

"Then I think you wrong him. And the reason why I have ventured to come to you is that you may know the impression which he has made upon one who was but the other day a stranger to him. I am sure that he loves you."

"I think he is light of heart."

"Oh, no, Miss Dale."

"And how am I to become his wife unless I love him well enough myself? Mrs. Arabin, I have made

up my mind about it. I shall never become any man's wife. Mamma and I are all in all together, and we shall remain together." As soon as these words were out of her mouth she hated herself for having spoken them. There was a maudlin, missish, namby-pamby sentimentality about them which disgusted her. She specially desired to be straightforward, resolute of purpose, honest-spoken, and free from all touch of affectation. And yet she had excused herself from marrying John Eames after the fashion of a sick school-girl. "It is no good talking about it any more," she said, getting up from her chair quickly.

"You are not angry with me;—or at any rate you will forgive me?"

"I 'm quite sure you have meant to be very good, and I am not a bit angry."

"And you will see him before you go?"

"Oh, yes; that is, if he likes to come to-day, or early to-morrow. I go home to-morrow. I cannot refuse him, because he is such an old friend,—almost like a brother. But it is of no use, Mrs. Arabin." Then Mrs. Arabin kissed her and left her, telling her that Mr. Eames would come to her that afternoon at half-past five. Lily promised that she would be at home to receive him.

"Won't you ride with us for the last time?" said Emily Dunstable when Lily gave notice that she would not want the horse on that afternoon.

"No; not to-day."

"You 'll never have another opportunity of riding with Emily Dunstable," said the bride elect;—"at least I hope not."

"Even under those circumstances I must refuse,

though I would give a guinea to be with you. John Eames is coming here to say good-bye."

"Oh; then indeed you must not come with us. Lily, what will you say to him?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, Lily, think of it."

"I have thought of it. I have thought of nothing else. I am tired of thinking of it. It is not good to think of anything so much. What does it matter?"

"It is very good to have some one to love one better than all the world besides."

"I have some one," said Lily, thinking of her mother, but not caring to descend again to the mawkish weakness of talking about her.

"Yes; but some one to be always with you, to do everything for you, to be your very own."

"It is very well for you," said Lily, "and I think that Bernard is the luckiest fellow in the world; but it will not do for me. I know in what college I 'll take my degree, and I wish they 'd let me write the letters after my name as the men do."

"What letters, Lily?"

"O.M., for Old Maid. I don't see why it should n't be as good as B.A. for Bachelor of Arts. It would mean a great deal more."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SHATTERED TREE.

When Mrs. Arabin saw Johnny in the middle of that day she could hardly give him much encouragement. And yet she felt by no means sure that he might not succeed even yet. Lily had been very positive in her answers, and yet there had been something, either in her words or in the tone of her voice, which had made Mrs. Arabin feel that even Lily was not quite sure of herself. There was still room for relenting. Nothing, however, had been said which could justify her in bidding John Eames simply "to go in and win." "I think he is light of heart," Lily had said. Those were the words which, of all that had been spoken, most impressed themselves on Mrs. Arabin's memory. She would not repeat them to her friend, but she would graft upon them such advice as she had to give him.

And this she did, telling him that she thought that perhaps Lily doubted his actual earnestness. "I would marry her this moment," said Johnny. But that was not enough, as Mrs. Arabin knew, to prove his earnestness. Many men, fickle as weathercocks, are ready to marry at the moment,—are ready to marry at the moment, because they are fickle, and think so little about it.

"But she hears, perhaps, of your liking other people," said Mrs. Arabin.

"I don't care a straw for any other person," said Johnny. "I wonder whether, if I was to shut myself up in a cage for six months, it would do any good?"

"If she had the keeping of the cage, perhaps it might," said Mrs. Arabin. She had nothing more to say to him on that subject, but to tell him that Miss Dale would expect him that afternoon at half-past five. "I told her that you would come to wish her good-bye, and she promised to see you."

"I wish she 'd say she would n't see me. Then there would be some chance," said Johnny.

Between him and Mrs. Arabin the parting was very affectionate. She told him how thankful she was for his kindness in coming to her, and how grateful she would ever be,—and the dean also,—for his attention to her. "Remember, Mr. Eames, that you will always be most welcome at the deanery of Barchester. And I do hope that before long you may be there with your wife." And so they parted.

He left her at about two, and went to Mr. Toogood's office in Bedford Row. He found his uncle, and the two went out to lunch together in Holborn. Between them there was no word said about Lily Dale, and John was glad to have some other subject in his mind for half an hour. Toogood was full of his triumph about Mr. Crawley, and of his successes in Barsetshire. He gave John a long account of his visit to Plumstead, and expressed his opinion that if all clergymen were like the archdeacon there would not be so much room for Dissenters. "I 've seen a good many parsons in my time," said Toogood; "but I don't think

I ever saw such a one as him. You know he is a clergyman somehow, and he never lets you forget it; but that 's about all. Most of 'em are never contented without choking you with their white cravats all the time you 're with 'em. As for Crawley himself," Mr. Toogood continued, "he 's not like anybody else that ever was born, saint or sinner, parson or layman. I never heard of such a man in all my experience. Though he knew where he got the cheque as well as I know it now, he would n't say so because the dean had said it was n't so. Somebody ought to write a book about it,—indeed they ought." Then he told the whole story of Dan Stringer, and how he had found Dan out, looking at the top of Dan's hat through the little aperture in the wall of the inn parlour. "When I saw the twitch in his hat, John, I knew he had handled the cheque himself. I don't mean to say that I 'm sharper than another man, and I don't think so; but I do mean to say that when you are in any difficulty of that sort, you ought to go to a lawyer. It 's his business, and a man does what is his business with patience and perseverance. It 's a pity, though, that that scoundrel should get off." Then Eames gave his uncle an account of his Italian trip, to and fro, and was congratulated also upon his success. John's great triumph lay in the fact that he had been only two nights in bed, and that he would not have so far condescended on those occasions but for the feminine weakness of his fellow-traveller. "We shan't forget it all in a hurry, —shall we, John?" said Mr. Toogood, in a pleasant voice, as they parted at the door of the luncheon-house in Holborn. Toogood was returning to his office, and John Eames was to prepare himself for his last attempt.

He went home to his lodgings, intending at first to change his dress,—to make himself smart for the work before him,—but after standing for a moment or two leaning on the chest of drawers in his bedroom, he gave up this idea. "After all that 's come and gone," he said to himself, "if I cannot win her as I am now, I cannot win her at all." And then he swore to himself a solemn oath, resolving that he would repeat the purport of it to Lily herself,—that this should be the last attempt. "What 's the use of it? Everybody ridicules me. And I am ridiculous. I am an ass. It 's all very well wanting to be prime minister; but if you can't be prime minister, you must do without being prime minister." Then he attempted to sing the old song—

> "Shall I, sighing in despair, die because a woman 's fair?
> If she be not fair for me, what care I how fair she be?"

But he did care, and he told himself that the song did him no good. As it was not time for him as yet to go to Lily, he threw himself on the sofa, and strove to read a book. Then all the weary nights of his journey prevailed over him, and he fell asleep.

When he awoke it wanted a quarter to six. He sprang up, and rushing out, jumped into a cab. "Berkeley Square,—as hard as you can go," he said. "Number —." He thought of Rosalind, and her counsels to lovers as to the keeping of time, and reflected that in such an emergency as his, he might really have ruined himself by that unfortunate slumber. When he got to Mrs. Thorne's door he knocked hurriedly, and bustled up to the drawing-room as though everything depended on his saving a minute. "I 'm afraid I 'm ever so much behind my time," he said.

"It does not matter in the least," said Lily. "As Mrs. Arabin said that perhaps you might call I would not be out of the way. I supposed that Sir Raffle was keeping you and that you would n't come."

"Sir Raffle was not keeping me. I fell asleep. That is the truth of it."

"I am so sorry that you should have been disturbed!"

"Do not laugh at me, Lily,—to-day. I had been travelling a good deal, and I suppose I was tired."

"I won't laugh at you," she said, and of a sudden her eyes became full of tears,—she did not know why. But there they were, and she was ashamed to put up her handkerchief, and she could not bring herself to turn away her face, and she had no resource but that he should see them.

"Lily!" he said.

"What a paladin you have been, John, rushing all about Europe on your friend's behalf!"

"Don't talk about that."

"And such a successful paladin too! Why am I not to talk about it? I am going home to-morrow, and I mean to talk about nothing else for a week. I am so very, very, very glad that you have saved your cousin." Then she did put up her handkerchief, making believe that her tears had been due to Mr. Crawley. But John Eames knew better than that.

"Lily," he said, "I 've come for the last time. It sounds as though I meant to threaten you; but you won't take it in that way. I think you will know what I mean. I have come for the last time—to ask you to be my wife." She had got up to greet him when he entered, and they were both still standing. She did

not answer him at once, but turning away from him walked towards the window. "You knew why I was coming to-day, Lily?"

"Mrs. Arabin told me. I could not be away when you were coming, but it would have been better."

"Is it so? Must it be so? Must you say that to me, Lily? Think of it for a moment, dear."

"I have thought of it."

"One word from you, yes or no, spoken now, is to be everything to me for always. Lily, cannot you say yes?" She did not answer him, but walked further away from him to another window. "Try to say yes. Look round at me with one look that may only half mean it;—that may tell me that it shall not positively be no for ever." I think that she almost tried to turn her face to him; but be that as it may, she kept her eyes steadily fixed upon the window-pane. "Lily," he said, "it is not that you are hard-hearted,—perhaps not altogether that you do not like me. I think that you believe things against me that are not true." As she heard this she moved her foot angrily upon the carpet. She had almost forgotten M. D., but now he had reminded her of the note. She assured herself that she had never believed anything against him except on evidence that was incontrovertible. But she was not going to speak to him on such a matter as that! It would not become her to accuse him. "Mrs. Arabin tells me that you doubt whether I am in earnest," he said.

Upon hearing this she flashed round upon him almost angrily. "I never said that."

"If you will ask me for any token of earnestness, I will give it you."

"I want no token."

"The best sign of earnestness a man can give generally in such a matter is to show how ready he is to be married."

"I never said anything about earnestness."

"At the risk of making you angry I will go on, Lily. Of course when you tell me that you will have nothing to say to me, I try to amuse myself"—"Yes; by writing love-letters to M. D.," said Lily to herself.—"What is a poor fellow to do? I tell you fairly that when I leave you I swear to myself that I will make love to the first girl I can see who will listen to me—to twenty, if twenty will let me. I feel I have failed, and it is so I punish myself for my failure." There was something in this which softened her brow, though she did not intend that it should be so; and she turned away again, that he might not see that her brow was softened. "But, Lily, the hope ever comes back again, and then neither the one nor the twenty are of avail,—even to punish me. When I look forward and see what it might be if you were with me, how green it all looks and how lovely, in spite of all the vows I have made, I cannot help coming back again." She was now again near the window, and he had not followed her. As she neither turned towards him nor answered him, he moved from the table near which he was standing on to the rug before the fire, and leaned with both his elbows on the mantelpiece. He could still watch her in the mirror over the fireplace, and could see that she was still seeming to gaze out upon the street. And had he not moved her? I think he had so far moved her now, that she had ceased to think of the woman who had written to her,—that she had ceased to reject

him in her heart on the score of such levities as that! If there were M. D's., like sunken rocks, in his course, whose fault was it? He was ready enough to steer his bark into the tranquil blue waters, if only she would aid him. I think that all his sins on that score were at this moment forgiven him. He had told her now what to him would be green and beautiful, and she did not find herself able to disbelieve him. She had banished M. D. out of her mind, but in doing so she admitted other reminiscences into it. And then,—was she in a moment to be talked out of the resolution of years; and was she to give up herself, not because she loved, but because the man who talked to her talked so well that he deserved a reward? Was she now to be as light, as foolish, as easy, as in those former days from which she had learned her wisdom? A picture of green lovely things could be delicious to her eyes as to his; but even for such a picture as that the price might be too dear! Of all living men,—of all men living in their present lives,—she loved best this man who was now waiting for some word of answer to his words, and she did love him dearly; she would have tended him if sick, have supplied him if in want, have mourned for him if dead, with the bitter grief of true affection;—but she could not say to herself that he should be her lord and master, the head of her house, the owner of herself, the ruler of her life. The shipwreck to which she had once come, and the fierce regrets which had thence arisen, had forced her to think too much of these things. "Lily," he said, still facing towards the mirror, "will you not come to me and speak to me?" She turned round, and stood a moment looking at him, and then, having again resolved that

it could not be as he wished, she drew near to him. "Certainly I will speak to you, John. Here I am." And she came close to him.

He took both her hands, and looked into her eyes. "Lily, will you be mine?"

"No, dear; it cannot be so."

"Why not, Lily?"

"Because of that other man."

"And is that to be a bar for ever?"

"Yes; for ever."

"Do you still love him?"

"No; no, no!"

"Then why should this be so?"

"I cannot tell, dear. It is so. If you take a young tree and split it, it still lives, perhaps. But it is n't a tree. It is only a fragment."

"Then be my fragment."

"So I will, if it can serve you to give standing ground to such a fragment in some corner of your garden. But I will not have myself planted out in the middle, for people to look at. What there is left would die soon." He still held her hands, and she did not attempt to draw them away. "John," she said, "next to mamma, I love you better than all the world. Indeed I do. I cannot be your wife, but you need never be afraid that I shall be more to another than I am to you."

"That will not serve me," he said, grasping both her hands till he almost hurt them, but not knowing that he did so. "That is no good."

"It is all the good I can do you. Indeed I can do you,—can do no one any good. The trees that the storms have splintered are never of use."

"And is this to be the end of all, Lily?"

"Not of our loving friendship."

"Friendship! I hate the word. I hear some one's step, and I had better leave you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, John. Be kinder than that to me as you are going." He turned back for a moment, took her hand, and held it tight against his heart, and then he left her. In the hall he met Mrs. Thorne, but, as he said afterwards, he had been too much knocked about to be able to throw a word to a dog.

To Mrs. Thorne Lily said hardly a word about John Eames, and when her cousin Bernard questioned her about him she was dumb. And in these days she could assume a manner, and express herself with her eyes as well as with her voice after a fashion which was apt to silence unwelcome questioners, even though they were as intimate with her as was her cousin Bernard. She had described her feelings more plainly to her lover than she had ever done to any one,—even to her mother; and having done so she meant to be silent on that subject for evermore. But of her settled purpose she did say some word to Emily Dunstable that night. "I do feel," she said, "that I have got the thing settled at last."

"And you have settled it, as you call it, in opposition to the wishes of all your friends?"

"That is true; and yet I have settled it rightly, and I would not for worlds have it unsettled again. There are matters on which friends should not have wishes, or at any rate should not express them."

"Is that meant to be severe to me?"

"No; not to you. I was thinking about mamma, and Bell, and my uncle, and Bernard, who all seem to

think that I am to be looked upon as a regular castaway, because I am not likely to have a husband of my own. Of course you, in your position, must think a girl a castaway who is n't going to be married?"

"I think that a girl who is going to be married has the best of it."

"And I think a girl who is n't going to be married has the best of it;—that 's all. But I feel that the thing is done now, and I am contented. For the last six or eight months there has come up, I know not how, a state of doubt which has made me so wretched that I have done literally nothing. I have n't been able to finish old Mrs. Hearn's tippet, literally because people would talk to me about that dearest of all dear fellows, John Eames. And yet all along I have known how it would be,—as well as I do now."

"I cannot understand you, Lily; I can't indeed."

"I can understand myself. I love him so well,—with that intimate, close, familiar affection,—that I could wash his clothes for him to-morrow, out of pure personal regard, and think it no shame. He could not ask me to do a single thing for him,—except the one thing,—that I would refuse. And I 'll go further. I would sooner marry him than any man in the world I ever saw, or, as I believe, that I ever shall see. And yet I am very glad that it is settled."

On the next day Lily Dale went down to the Small House of Allington, and so she passes out of our sight. I can only ask the reader to believe that she was in earnest, and express my own opinion, in this last word that I shall ever write respecting her, that she will live and die as Lily Dale.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ARABINS RETURN TO BARCHESTER.

In these days Mr. Harding was keeping his bed at the deanery, and most of those who saw him declared that he would never again leave it. The archdeacon had been slow to believe so, because he had still found his father-in-law able to talk to him;—not indeed with energy, but then Mr. Harding had never been energetic on ordinary matters,—but with the same soft cordial interest in things which had ever been customary with him. He had latterly been much interested about Mr. Crawley, and would make both the archdeacon and Mrs. Grantly tell him all that they heard, and what they thought of the case. This of course had been before the all-important news had been received from Mrs. Arabin. Mr. Harding was very anxious, "Firstly," as he said, "for the welfare of the poor man, of whom I cannot bring myself to think ill; and then for the honour of the cloth in Barchester." "We are as liable to have black sheep here as elsewhere," the archdeacon replied. "But, my dear, I do not think that the sheep is black; and we never have had black sheep in Barchester." "Have n't we though?" said the archdeacon, thinking, however, of sheep who were black with a different kind of blackness from this which was now attributed to poor Mr. Crawley,—of a blackness

which was not absolute blackness to Mr. Harding's milder eyes. The archdeacon, when he heard his father-in-law talk after this fashion, expressed his opinion that he might live yet for years. He was just the man to linger on, living in bed,—as indeed he had lingered all his life out of bed. But the doctor who attended him thought otherwise, as did also Mrs. Grantly, and as did Mrs. Baxter, and as also did Posy. "Grandpa won't get up any more, will he?" Posy said to Mrs. Baxter. "I hope he will, my dear; and that very soon." "I don't think he will," said Posy, "because he said he would never see the big fiddle again." "That comes of his being a little melancholy like, my dear," said Mrs. Baxter.

Mrs. Grantly at this time went into Barchester almost every day, and the archdeacon, who was very often in the city, never went there without passing half an hour with the old man. These two clergymen, essentially different in their characters and in every detail of conduct, had been so much thrown together by circumstances that the life of each had almost become a part of the life of the other. Although the fact of Mr. Harding's residence at the deanery had of late years thrown him oftener into the society of the dean than that of his other son-in-law, yet his intimacy with the archdeacon had been so much earlier, and his memories of the archdeacon were so much clearer, that he depended almost more upon the rector of Plumstead, who was absent, than he did upon the dean, whom he customarily saw every day. It was not so with his daughters. His Nelly, as he had used to call her, had ever been his favourite, and the circumstances of their joint lives had been such, that they had never

been further separated than from one street of Barchester to another,—and that only for the very short period of the married life of Mrs. Arabin's first husband. For all that was soft and tender therefore,—which with Mr. Harding was all in the world that was charming to him,—he looked to his youngest daughter; but for authority and guidance and wisdom, and for information as to what was going on in the world, he had still turned to his son-in-law, the archdeacon,—as he had done for nearly forty years. For so long had the archdeacon been potent as a clergyman in the diocese, and throughout the whole duration of such potency his word had been law to Mr. Harding in most of the affairs of life,—a law generally to be obeyed, and if sometimes to be broken, still a law. And now, when all was so nearly over, he would become unhappy if the archdeacon's visits were far between. Dr. Grantly, when he found that this was so, would not allow that they should be far between.

"He puts me so much in mind of my father," the archdeacon said to his wife one day.

"He is not so old as your father was when he died, by many years," said Mrs. Grantly, "and I think one sees that difference."

"Yes; and therefore I say that he may still live for years. My father, when he took to his bed at last, was manifestly near his death. The wonder with him was that he continued to live so long. Do you not remember how the London doctor was put out because his prophecies were not fulfilled?"

"I remember it well;—as if it were yesterday."

"And in that way there was a great difference. My father, who was physically a much stronger man, did

not succumb so easily. But the likeness is in their characters. There is the same mild sweetness, becoming milder and sweeter as they increased in age; —a sweetness that never could believe much evil, but that could believe less, and still less, as the weakness of age came on them. No amount of evidence would induce your father to think that Mr. Crawley stole that money." This was said of course before the telegram had come from Venice.

"As far as that goes I agree with him," said Mrs. Grantly, who had her own reasons for choosing to believe Mr. Crawley to be innocent. "If your son, my dear, is to marry a man's daughter, it will be as well that you should at least be able to say that you do not believe that man to be a thief."

"That is neither here nor there," said the archdeacon. "A jury must decide it."

"No jury in Barsetshire shall decide it for me," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I 'm sick of Mr. Crawley, and I 'm sorry I spoke of him," said the archdeacon. "But look at Mrs. Proudie. You 'll agree that she was not the most charming woman in the world."

"She certainly was not," said Mrs. Grantly, who was anxious to encourage her husband, if she could do so without admitting anything which might injure herself afterwards.

"And she was at one time violently insolent to your father. And even the bishop thought to trample upon him. Do you remember the bishop's chaplain preaching against your father's chaunting? If I ever forget it!" And the archdeacon slapped his closed fist against his open hand.

"Don't, dear; don't! What is the good of being violent now?"

"Paltry little fool! It will be long enough before such a chaunt as that is heard in any English cathedral again." Then Mrs. Grantly got up and kissed her husband, but he, somewhat negligent of the kiss, went on with his speech. "But your father remembers nothing of it, and if there was a single human being who shed a tear in Barchester for that woman, I believe it was your father. And it was the same with mine. It came to that at last, that I could not bear to speak to him of any shortcoming as to one of his own clergymen. I might as well have pricked him with a penknife. And yet they say men become heartless and unfeeling as they grow old!"

"Some do, I suppose."

"Yes; the heartless and unfeeling do. As the bodily strength fails and the power of control becomes lessened, the natural aptitude of the man pronounces itself more clearly. I take it that that is it. Had Mrs. Proudie lived to be a hundred and fifty, she would have spoken spiteful lies on her death-bed." Then Mrs. Grantly told herself that her husband, should he live to be a hundred and fifty, would still be expressing his horror of Mrs. Proudie,—even on his death-bed.

As soon as the letter from Mrs. Arabin had reached Plumstead, the archdeacon and his wife arranged that they would both go together to the deanery. There were the double tidings to be told,—those of Mr. Crawley's assured innocence, and those also of Mrs. Arabin's instant return. And as they went together various ideas were passing through their minds in reference to the marriage of their son with Grace Craw-

ley. They were both now reconciled to it. Mrs. Grantly had long ceased to feel any opposition to it, even though she had not seen Grace; and the archdeacon was prepared to give way. Had he not promised that in a certain case he would give way, and had not that case now come to pass? He had no wish to go back from his word. But he had a difficulty in this,—that he liked to make all the affairs of his life matter for enjoyment, almost for triumph; but how was he to be triumphant over this marriage, or how even was he to enjoy it, seeing that he had opposed it so bitterly? Those posters, though they were now pulled down, had been up on all barn ends and walls, patent,—alas, too patent,—to all the world of Barsetshire! "What will Mr. Crawley do now, do you suppose?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"What will he do?"

"Yes; must he go on at Hogglestock?"

"What else?" said the archdeacon.

"It is a pity something could not be done for him after all he has undergone. How on earth can he be expected to live there with a wife and family, and no private means?" To this the archdeacon made no answer. Mrs. Grantly had spoken almost immediately upon their quitting Plumstead, and the silence was continued till the carriage had entered the suburbs of the city. Then Mrs. Grantly spoke again, asking a question, with some internal trepidation, which, however, she managed to hide from her husband. "When poor papa does go, what shall you do about St. Ewold's?" Now, St. Ewold's was a rural parish lying about two miles out of Barchester, the living of which was in the gift of the archdeacon, and to which the archdeacon

had presented his father-in-law, under certain circumstances, which need not be repeated in this last chronicle of Barsetshire. Have they not been written in other chronicles? "When poor papa does go, what will you do about St. Ewold's?" said Mrs. Grantly, trembling inwardly. A word too much might, as she well knew, settle the question against Mr. Crawley for ever. But were she to postpone the word till too late, the question would be settled as fatally.

"I have n't thought about it," he said sharply. "I don't like thinking of such things while the incumbent is still living." Oh, archdeacon, archdeacon! unless that other chronicle be a false chronicle, how hast thou forgotten thyself and thy past life? "Particularly not, when that incumbent is your father," said the archdeacon. Mrs. Grantly said nothing more about St. Ewold's. She would have said as much as she had intended to say if she had succeeded in making the archdeacon understand that St. Ewold's would be a very nice refuge for Mr. Crawley after all the miseries which he had endured at Hogglestock.

They learned as they entered the deanery that Mrs. Baxter had already heard of Mrs. Arabin's return. "Oh, yes, ma'am. Mr. Harding got a letter hisself, and I got another,—separate; both from Venice, ma'am. But when master is to come, nobody seems to know." Mrs. Baxter knew that the dean had gone to Jerusalem, and was inclined to think that from such distant bournes there was no return for any traveller. The east is always further than the west in the estimation of the Mrs. Baxters of the world. Had the dean gone to Canada, she would have thought that he might come back to-morrow. But still there was the

news to be told of Mr. Crawley, and there was also joy to be expressed at the sudden coming back of the much-wished-for mistress of the deanery.

"It 's so good of you to come both together," said Mr. Harding.

"We thought we should be too many for you," said the archdeacon.

"Too many! Oh, dear, no. I like to have people by me; and as for voices, and noise, and all that, the more the better. But I am weak. I 'm weak in my legs. I don't think I shall ever stand again."

"Yes, you will," said the archdeacon.

"We have brought you good news," said Mrs. Grantly.

"Is it not good news that Nelly will be home this week? You can't understand what a joy it is to me. I used to think sometimes, at night, that I should never see her again. That she would come back in time was all I have had to wish for." He was lying on his back, and as he spoke he pressed his withered hands together above the bed-clothes. They could not begin immediately to tell him of Mr. Crawley, but as soon as his mind had turned itself away from the thoughts of his absent daughter, Mrs. Grantly again reverted to her news.

"We have come to tell you about Mr. Crawley, papa."

"What about him?"

"He is quite innocent."

"I knew it, my dear. I always said so. Did I not always say so, archdeacon?"

"Indeed you did. I 'll give you that credit."

"And is it all found out?" asked Mr. Harding.

"As far as he is concerned, everything is found out,"

said Mrs. Grantly. "Eleanor gave him the cheque herself."

"Nelly gave it to him?"

"Yes, papa. The dean meant her to give him fifty pounds. But it seems she got to be soft of heart and made it seventy. She had the cheque by her, and put it into the envelope with the notes."

"Some of Stringer's people seem to have stolen the cheque from Mr. Soames," said the archdeacon.

"Oh, dear; I hope not."

"Somebody must have stolen it, papa."

"I had hoped not, Susan," said Mr. Harding. Both the archdeacon and Mrs. Grantly knew that it was useless to argue with him on such a point, and so they let that go.

Then they came to discuss Mr. Crawley's present position, and Mr. Harding ventured to ask a question or two as to Grace's chance of marriage. He did not often interfere in the family arrangements of his son-in-law,—and never did so when those family arrangements were concerned with high matters. He had hardly opened his mouth in reference to the marriage of that august lady who was now the Marchioness of Hartletop. And of the Lady Anne, the wife of the Rev. Charles Grantly, who was always prodigiously civil to him, speaking to him very loud, as though he were deaf because he was old, and bringing him cheap presents from London of which he did not take much heed, —of her he rarely said a word, or of her children, to either of his daughters. But now his grandson, Henry Grantly, was going to marry a girl of whom he felt that he might speak without impropriety. "I suppose it will be a match; won't it, my dears?"

"Not a doubt about it," said Mrs. Grantly. Mr. Harding looked at his son-in-law, but his son-in-law said nothing. The archdeacon did not even frown,—but only moved himself a little uneasily in his chair.

"Dear, dear! What a comfort that must be," said the old man.

"I have not seen her yet," said Mrs. Grantly; "but the archdeacon declares that she has all the graces rolled into one."

"I never said anything half so absurd," replied the archdeacon.

"But he really is quite in love with her, papa," said Mrs. Grantly. "He confessed to me that he gave her a kiss, and he only saw her once for five minutes."

"I should like to give her a kiss," said Mr. Harding.

"So you shall, papa, and I 'll bring her here on purpose. As soon as ever the thing is settled we mean to ask her to Plumstead."

"Do you though? How nice! How happy Henry will be!"

"And if she comes,—and of course she will,—I 'll lose no time in bringing her over to you. Nelly must see her of course."

As they were leaving the room Mr. Harding called the archdeacon back, and taking him by the hand, spoke one word to him in a whisper. "I don't like to interfere," he said; "but might not Mr. Crawley have St. Ewold's?" The archdeacon took up the old man's hand and kissed it. Then he followed his wife out of the room, without making any answer to Mr. Harding's question.

Three days after this Mrs. Arabin reached the dean-

ery, and the joy at her return was very great. "My dear, I have been sick for you," said Mr. Harding.

"Oh, papa, I ought not to have gone."

"Nay, my dear, do not say that. Would it make me happy that you should be a prisoner here for ever? It was only when I seemed to get so weak that I thought about it. I felt that it must be near when they bade me not to go to the cathedral any more."

"If I had been here, I could have gone with you, papa."

"It is better as it is. I know now that I was not fit for it. When your sister came to me I never thought of remonstrating. I knew then that I had seen it for the last time."

"We need not say that yet, papa."

"I did think that when you came home we might crawl there together some warm morning. I did think of that for a time. But it will never be so, dear. I shall never see anything now that I do not see from here,—and not that for long. Do not cry, Nelly. I have nothing to regret, nothing to make me unhappy. I know how poor and weak has been my life; but I know how rich and strong is that other life. Do not cry, Nelly,—not till I am gone; and then not beyond measure. Why should any one weep for those who go away full of years,—and full of hope?"

On the day but one following the dean also reached his home. The final arrangements of his tour, as well as those of his wife, had been made to depend on Mr. Crawley's trial; for he also had been hurried back by John Eames's visit to Florence. "I should have come at once," he said to his wife, "when they wrote to ask me whether Crawley had taken the cheque from me,

had anybody then told me that he was in actual trouble; but I had no idea then that they were charging him with theft."

"As far as I can learn they never really suspected him until after your answer had come. They had been quite sure that your answer would be in the affirmative."

"What he must have endured it is impossible to conceive. I shall go out to him to-morrow."

"Would he not come to us?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"I doubt it. I will ask him, of course. I will ask them all here. This about Henry and the girl may make a difference. He has resigned the living, and some of the palace people are doing the duty."

"But he can have it again?"

"Oh, yes; he can have it again. For the matter of that, I need simply give him back his letter. Only he is so odd,—so unlike other people! And he has tried to live there, and has failed; and is now in debt. I wonder whether Grantly would give him St. Ewold's?"

"I wish he would. But you must ask him. I should not dare."

As to the matter of the cheque, the dean acknowledged to his wife at last that he had some recollection of her having told him that she had made the sum of money up to seventy pounds. "I don't feel certain of it now; but I think you may have done so."

"I am quite sure I could not have done it without telling you," she replied.

"At any rate you said nothing of the cheque," pleaded the dean.

"I don't suppose I did," said Mrs. Arabin. "I thought that cheques were like any other money; but I shall know better for the future."

On the following morning the dean rode over to Hogglestock, and as he drew near to the house of his old friend, his spirits flagged,—for to tell the truth, he dreaded the meeting. Since the day on which he had brought Mr. Crawley from a curacy in Cornwall into the diocese of Barchester, his friend had been a trouble to him rather than a joy. The trouble had been a trouble of spirit altogether,—not at all of pocket. He would willingly have picked the Crawleys out from the pecuniary mud into which they were ever falling, time after time, had it been possible. For, though the dean was hardly to be called a rich man, his lines had fallen to him not only in pleasant places, but in easy circumstances;—and Mr. Crawley's embarrassments, though overwhelming to himself, were not so great as to have been heavy to the dean. But in striving to do this he had always failed, had always suffered, and had generally been rebuked. Crawley would attempt to argue with him as to the improper allotment of church endowments,—declaring that he did not do so with any reference to his own circumstances, but simply because the subject was one naturally interesting to clergymen. And this he would do, as he was waving off with his hand offers of immediate assistance which were indispensable. Then there had been scenes between the dean and Mrs. Crawley,—terribly painful,—and which had taken place in direct disobedience to the husband's positive injunctions. "Sir," he had once said to the dean, "I request that nothing may pass from your hands to the hands of my wife." "Tush, tush," the dean had answered. "I will have no tushing or pshawing on such a matter. A man's wife is his very own, the breath of his nostril, the blood of his

heart, the rib from his body. It is for me to rule my wife, and I tell you that I will not have it." After that the gifts had come from the hands of Mrs. Arabin;—and then again after that, in the direst hour of his need, Crawley had himself come and taken money from the dean's hands! The interview had been so painful that Arabin would hardly have been able to count the money or to know of what it had consisted, had he taken the notes and cheque out of the envelope in which his wife had put them. Since that day the two had not met each other, and since that day these new troubles had come. Arabin as yet knew but little of the manner in which they had been borne, except that Crawley had felt himself compelled to resign the living of Hogglestock. He knew nothing of Mrs. Proudie's persecution, except what he gathered from the fact of the clerical commission of which he had been informed; but he could imagine that Mrs. Proudie would not lie easy on her bed while a clergyman was doing duty almost under her nose, who was guilty of the double offence of being accused of a theft, and of having been put into his living by the dean. The dean, therefore, as he rode on, pictured to himself his old friend in a terrible condition. And it might be that even now that condition would hardly have been improved. He was no longer suspected of being a thief; but he could have no money in his pocket; and it might well be that his sufferings would have made him almost mad.

The dean also got down and left his horse at a farmyard,—as Grantly had done with his carriage; and walked on first to the school. He heard voices inside, but could not distinguish from them whether Mr.

Crawley was there or not. Slowly he opened the door, and looking round saw that Jane Crawley was in the ascendant. Jane did not know him at once, but told him when he had introduced himself that her father had gone down to Hoggle End. He had started two hours ago, but it was impossible to say when he might be back. "He sometimes stays all day long with the brickmakers," said Jane. Her mother was at home, and she would take the dean into the house. As she said this she told him that her father was sometimes better and sometimes worse. "But he has never been so very, very bad, since Henry Grantly and mamma's cousin came and told us about the cheque." That word Henry Grantly made the dean understand that there might yet be a ray of sunshine among the Crawleys.

"There is papa," said Jane, as they got to the gate. Then they waited for a few minutes till Mr. Crawley came up, very hot, wiping the sweat from his forehead.

"Crawley," said the dean, "I cannot tell you how glad I am to see you, and how rejoiced I am that this accusation has fallen off from you."

"Verily the news came in time, Arabin," said the other; "but it was a narrow pinch,—a narrow pinch. Will you not enter, and see my wife?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. CRAWLEY SPEAKS OF HIS COAT.

At this time Grace had returned home from Framley. As long as the terrible tragedy of the forthcoming trial was dragging itself on she had been content to stay away, at her mother's bidding. It has not been possible in these pages to tell of all the advice that had been given to the ladies of the Crawley family in their great difficulty, and of all the assistance that had been offered. The elder Lady Lufton and the younger, and Mrs. Robarts, had continually been in consultation on the subject; Mrs. Grantly's opinion had been asked and given; and even the Miss Prettymans and Mrs. Walker had found means of expressing themselves. The communications to Mrs. Crawley had been very frequent,—though they had not of course been allowed to reach the ears of Mr. Crawley. What was to be done when the living should be gone and Mr. Crawley should be in prison? Some said that he might be there for six weeks, and some for two years. Old Lady Lufton made anxious enquiries about Judge Medlicote, before whom it was said that the trial would be taken. Judge Medlicote was a Dissenter, and old Lady Lufton was in despair. When she was assured by some liberally disposed friend that this would certainly make no difference, she shook her head woefully. "I don't

know why we are to have Dissenters at all," she said, "to try people who belong to the Established Church." When she heard that Judge Medlicote would certainly be the judge, she made up her mind that two years would be the least of it. She would not have minded it, she said, if he had been a Roman Catholic. And whether the punishment might be for six weeks or for two years, what should be done with the family? Where should they be housed? How should they be fed? What should be done with the poor man when he came out of prison? It was a case in which the generous, soft-hearted old Lady Lufton was almost beside herself. "As for Grace," said young Lady Lufton, "it will be a great deal better that we should keep her amongst us. Of course she will become Mrs. Grantly, and it will be nicer for her that it should be so." In those days the posters had been seen, and the flitting to Pau had been talked of, and the Framley opinion was that Grace had better remain at Framley till she should be carried off to Pau. There were schemes, too, about Jane. But what was to be done for the wife? And what was to be done for Mr. Crawley? Then came the news from Mrs. Arabin, and all interest in Judge Medlicote was at an end.

But even now, after this great escape, what was to be done? As to Grace, she had felt the absolute necessity of being obedient to her friends,—with the consent, of course, of her mother,—during the great tribulation of her family. Things were so bad that she had not the heart to make them worse by giving any unnecessary trouble as to herself. Having resolved,—and having made her mother so understand,—that on one

point she would guide herself by her own feelings, she was contented to go hither and thither as she was told, and to do as she was bid. Her hope was that Miss Prettyman would allow her to go back to her teaching, but it had come to be understood among them all that nothing was to be said on that subject till the trial should be over. Till that time she would be passive. But then, as I have said, had come the news from Mrs. Arabin, and Grace, with all the others, understood that there would be no trial. When this was known and acknowledged, she declared her purpose of going back to Hogglestock. She would go back at once. When asked both by Lady Lufton and by Mrs. Robarts why she was in so great a haste, she merely said that it must be so. She was, as it were, absolved from her passive obedience to Framley authorities by the diminution of the family misfortunes.

Mrs. Robarts understood the feeling by which Grace was hurried away. "Do you know why she is so obstinate?" Lady Lufton asked.

"I think I do," said Mrs. Robarts.

"And what is it?"

"Should Major Grantly renew his offer to her she is under a pledge to accept him now."

"Of course he will renew it, and of course she will accept him."

"Just so. But she prefers that he should come for her to her own house,—because of its poverty. If he chooses to seek her there, I don't think she will make much difficulty." Lady Lufton demurred to this, not, however, with anger, and expressed a certain amount of mild displeasure. She did not quite see why Major

Grantly should not be allowed to come and do his love-making comfortably, where there was a decent dinner for him to eat, and chairs and tables and sofas and carpets. She said that she thought that something was due to Major Grantly. She was in truth a little disappointed that she was not allowed to have her own way, and to arrange the marriage at Framley under her own eye. But, through it all, she appreciated Grace; and they who knew her well and heard what she said upon the occasion, understood that her favour was not to be withdrawn. All young women were divided by old Lady Lufton into sheep and goats,—very white sheep and very black goats; and Grace was to be a sheep. Thus it came to pass that Grace Crawley was at home when the dean visited Hogglestock. "Mamma," she said, looking out of the window, "there is the dean with papa at the gate."

"It was a narrow pinch—a very narrow pinch," Mr. Crawley had said when his friend congratulated him on his escape. The dean felt at the moment that not for many years had he heard the incumbent of Hogglestock speak either of himself or of anything else with so manifest an attempt at jocularity. Arabin had expected to find the man broken down by the weight of his sorrows, and lo! at the first moment of their first interview he himself began to ridicule them! Crawley, having thus alluded to the narrow pinch, had asked his visitor to enter the house and see his wife.

"Of course I will," said Arabin, "but I will speak just a word to you first." Jane, who had accompanied the dean from the school, now left them, and went into the house to her mother. "My wife cannot forgive herself about the cheque," continued he.

"There is nothing to be forgiven," said Mr. Crawley; "nothing."

"She feels that what she did was awkward and foolish. She ought never to have paid a cheque away in such a manner. She knows that now."

"It was given,—not paid," said Crawley; and as he spoke something of the black cloud came back upon his face. "And I am well aware how hard Mrs. Arabin strove to take away from the alms she bestowed the bitterness of the sting of eleemosynary aid. If you please, Arabin, we will not talk any more of that. I can never forget that I have been a beggar, but I need not make my beggary the matter of conversation. I hope the Holy Land has fulfilled your expectation?"

"It has more than done so," said the dean, bewildered by the sudden change.

"For myself, it is, of course, impossible that I should ever visit any scenes except those to which my immediate work may call me,—never in this world. The New Jerusalem is still within my reach,—if it be not forfeited by pride and obstinacy; but the old Jerusalem I can never behold. Methinks, because it is so, I would sooner stand with my foot on Mount Olivet, or drink a cup of water in the village of Bethany, than visit any other spot within the traveller's compass. The sources of the Nile, of which men now talk so much,—I see it in the papers and reviews which the ladies at Framley are so good as to send to my wife,—do not interest me much. I have no ambition to climb Mont Blanc or the Matterhorn. Rome makes my mouth water but little, nor even Athens much. I can realise without seeing all that Athens could show me, and can

fancy that the existing truth would destroy more than it would build up. But to have stood on Calvary!"

"We don't know where Calvary was," said the dean.

"I fancy that I should know,—should know enough," said the illogical and unreasonable Mr. Crawley. "Is it true that you can look over from the spot on which He stood as He came across the brow of the hill, and see the huge stones of the Temple placed there by Solomon's men,—as He saw them;—right across the brook Cedron, is it not?"

"It is all there, Crawley,—just as your knowledge of it tells you."

"In the privilege of seeing those places I can almost envy a man his—money." The last word he uttered after a pause. He had been about to say that under such temptation he could almost envy a man his promotion; but he bethought himself that on such an occasion as this it would be better that he should spare the dean. "And now, if you wish it, we will go in. I fancy that I see my wife at the window, as though she were waiting for us." So saying, he strode on along the little path, and the dean was fain to follow him, even though he had said so little of all that he had intended to say.

As soon as he was with Mrs. Crawley he repeated his apology about the cheque, and found himself better able to explain himself than he could do when alone with her husband. "Of course, it has been our fault," he said.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Crawley, "how can you have been in fault when your only object was to do us good?"

But, nevertheless, the dean took the blame upon his own shoulders, or rather upon those of his wife, and

declared himself to be responsible for all the trouble about the cheque.

"Let it go," said Crawley, after sitting for a while in silence; "let it pass."

"You cannot wonder, Crawley," said the dean, "that I should have felt myself obliged to speak of it."

"For the future it will be well that it should be forgotten," said Crawley; "or, if not forgotten, treated as though forgotten. And now, dean, what must I do about the living?"

"Just resume it, as though nothing had happened."

"But that may hardly be done without the bishop's authority. I speak, of course, with deference to your higher and better information on such subjects. My experience in the taking up and laying down of livings has not been extended. But it seemeth to me that though it may certainly be in your power to nominate me again to the perpetual curacy of this parish,—presuming your patronage to be unlimited and not to reach you in rotation only,—yet the bishop may demand to institute again, and must so demand, unless he pleases to permit that my letter to him shall be revoked and cancelled."

"Of course he will do anything of that kind. He must know the circumstances as well as you and I do."

"At present they tell me that he is much afflicted by the death of his wife, and, therefore, can hardly be expected to take immediate action. There came here on the last Sunday one Mr. Snapper, his lordship's chaplain."

"We all know Snapper," said the dean. "Snapper is not a bad little fellow."

"I say nothing of his being bad, my friend, but merely mention the fact that on Sunday morning last he performed the service in our church. On the Sunday previous, one Mr. Thumble was here."

"We all know Thumble, too," said the dean; "or, at least, know something about him."

"He has been a thorn in our sides," said Mrs. Crawley, unable to restrain the expression of her dislike when Mr. Thumble's name was mentioned.

"Nay, my dear, nay;—do not allow yourself the use of language so strong against a brother. Our flesh at that time was somewhat prone to fester, and little thorns made us very sore."

"He is a horrible man," said Jane, almost in a whisper; but the words were distinctly audible by the dean.

"They need not come any more," said Arabin.

"That is where I fear we differ. I think they must come,—or some others in their place,—till the bishop shall have expressed his pleasure to the contrary. I have submitted myself to his lordship, and, having done so, feel that I cannot again go up into my pulpit till he shall have authorised me to do so. For a time, Arabin, I combated the bishop, believing,—then and now,—that he put forth his hand against me after a fashion which the law had not sanctioned. And I made bold to stand in his presence and to tell him that I would not obey him, except in things legal. But afterwards, when he proceeded formally, through the action of a commission, I submitted myself. And I regard myself still as being under submission."

It was impossible to shake him. Arabin remained there for more than an hour, trying to pass on to another subject, but being constantly brought back by

Mr. Crawley himself to the fact of his own dependent position. Nor would he condescend to supplicate the bishop. It was, he surmised, the duty of Dr. Tempest, together with the other four clergymen, to report to the bishop on the question of the alleged theft; and then doubtless the bishop, when he had duly considered the report, and—as Mr. Crawley seemed to think was essentially necessary—had sufficiently recovered from the grief at his wife's death, would, at his leisure, communicate his decision to Mr. Crawley. Nothing could be more complete than Mr. Crawley's humility in reference to the bishop; and he never seemed to be tired of declaring that he had submitted himself!

And then the dean, finding it to be vain to expect to be left alone with Mr. Crawley for a moment,—in vain also to wait for a proper opening for that which he had to say,—rushed violently at his other subject. "And now, Mrs. Crawley," he said, "Mrs. Arabin wishes you all to come over to the deanery for a while and stay with us."

"Mrs. Arabin is too kind," said Mrs. Crawley, looking across at her husband.

"We should like it of all things," said the dean, with perhaps more of good nature than of truth. "Of course you must have been knocked about a good deal."

"Indeed we have," said Mrs. Crawley.

"And till you are somewhat settled again I think that the change of scene would be good for all of you. Come, Crawley, I 'll talk to you every evening about Jerusalem for as long as you please;—and then there will perhaps come back to us something of the pleasantness of old days." As she heard this Mrs. Crawley's

eyes became full of tears, and she could not altogether hide them. What she had endured during the last four months had almost broken her spirit. The burden had at last been too heavy for her strength. "You cannot fancy, Crawley, how often I have thought of the old days, and wished that they might return. I have found it very hard to get an opportunity of saying so much to you; but I will say it now."

"It may hardly be as you say," said Crawley, grimly.

"You mean that the old days can never be brought back?"

"Assuredly they cannot. But it was not that that I meant. It may not be that I and mine should transfer ourselves to your roof and sojourn there."

"Why should you not?"

"The reasons are many, and on the face of things. The reason, perhaps, the most on the face is to be found in my wife's gown, and in my coat." This Mr. Crawley said very gravely, looking neither to the right nor to the left, nor at the face of any of them, nor at his own garment, nor at hers, but straight before him; and when he had so spoken he said not a word further, —not going on to dilate on his poverty as the dean expected that he would do.

"At such a time such reasons should stand for nothing," said the dean.

"And why not now as they always do, and always must till the power of tailors shall have waned, and the daughters of Eve shall toil and spin no more? Like to like is true, and should be held to be true, of all societies and of all campacts for co-operation and mutual living. Here, where, if I may venture to say

so, you and I are like to like;—for the new gloss of your coat,"—the dean, as it happened, had on at the moment a very old coat, his oldest coat, selected perhaps with some view to this special visit,—"does not obtrude itself in my household, as would the threadbare texture of mine in yours;—I can open my mouth to you and converse with you at my ease; you are now to me that Frank Arabin who has so often comforted me and so often confuted me; whom I may perhaps on an occasion have confuted—and perhaps have comforted. But were I sitting with you in your library in Barchester, my threadbare coat would be too much for me. I should be silent, if not sullen. I should feel the weight of all my poverty, and the greater weight of all your wealth. For my children, let them go. I have come to know that they will be better away from me."

"Papa!" said Jane.

"Papa does not mean it," said Grace, coming up to him and standing close to him.

There was silence amongst them for a few moments, and then the master of the house shook himself,—literally shook himself, till he had shaken off the cloud. He had taken Grace by the hand, and thrusting out the other arm had got it round Jane's waist. "When a man has girls, Arabin," he said, "as you have, but not big girls yet like Grace here, of course he knows that they will fly away."

"I shall not fly away," said Jane.

"I don't know what papa means," said Grace.

Upon the whole the dean thought it the pleasantest visit he had ever made to Hogglestock, and when he got home he told his wife that he believed that the ac-

cusation made against Mr. Crawley had done him good. "I could not say a word in private to her," he said, "but I did promise that you would go and see her." On the very next day Mrs. Arabin went over, and I think that the visit was a comfort to Mrs. Crawley.

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS DEMOLINES DESIRES TO BECOME A FINGER-POST.

John Eames had passed Mrs. Thorne in the hall of her own house almost without noticing her as he took his departure from Lily Dale. She had told him as plainly as words could speak that she could not bring herself to be his wife,—and he had believed her. He had sworn to himself that if he did not succeed now he would never ask her again. "It would be foolish and unmanly to do so," he said to himself as he rushed along the street towards his club. No! That romance was over. At last there had come an end to it! "It has taken a good bit out of me," he said, arresting his steps suddenly that he might stand still and think of it all. "By George, yes! A man does n't go through that kind of thing without losing some of the caloric. I could n't do it again if an angel came in my way." He went to his club, and tried to be jolly. He ordered a good dinner, and got some man to come and dine with him. For an hour or so, he held himself up, and did appear to be jolly. But as he walked home at night, and gave himself time to think over what had taken place with deliberation, he stopped in the gloom of a deserted street, and leaning against the rails burst into tears. He had really loved her, and she was never to be his. He had wanted her,—and it is so painful a thing to miss what

you want when you have done your very best to obtain it! To struggle in vain always hurts the pride; but the wound made by the vain struggle for a woman is sorer than any other wound so made. He gnashed his teeth, and struck the iron railings with his stick;—and then he hurried home, swearing that he would never give another thought to Lily Dale. In the dead of the night, thinking of it still, he asked himself whether it would not be a fine thing to wait another ten years, and then go to her again. In such a way would he not make himself immortal as a lover beyond any Jacob or any Leander?

The next day he went to his office and was very grave. When Sir Raffle complimented him on being back before his time, he simply said that when he had accomplished that for which he had gone, he had, of course, come back. Sir Raffle could not get a word out of him about Mr. Crawley. He was very grave, and intent upon his work. Indeed, he was so serious that he quite afflicted Sir Raffle,—whose mock activity felt itself to be confounded by the official zeal of his private secretary. During the whole of that day Johnny was resolving that there could be no cure for his malady but hard work. He would not only work hard at the office if he remained there, but he would take to heavy reading. He rather thought that he would go deep into Greek and do a translation, or take up the exact sciences and make a name for himself that way. But as he had enough for the life of a secluded literary man without his salary, he rather thought that he would give up his office altogether. He had a mutton-chop at home that evening, and spent his time in endeavouring to read out loud to

himself certain passages from the Iliad;—for he had bought a Homer as he returned from his office. At nine o'clock he went, half-price, to the Strand Theatre. How he met there his old friend Boulger, and went afterwards to the Cock and had a supper, need not here be told with more accurate detail.

On the evening of the next day he was bound by his appointment to go to Porchester Terrace. In the moments of his enthusiasm about Homer he had declared to himself that he could never go near Miss Demolines again. Why should he? All that kind of thing was nothing to him now. He would simply send her his compliments and say that he was prevented by business from keeping his engagement. She, of course, would go on writing to him for a time, but he would simply leave her letters unanswered, and the thing, of course, would come to an end at last. He afterwards said something to Boulger about Miss Demolines,—but that was during the jollity of their supper,—and he then declared that he would follow out that little game. "I don't see why a fellow is n't to amuse himself, eh, Boulger, old boy?" Boulger winked and grinned, and said that some amusements were dangerous. "I don't think that there is any danger there," said Johnny. "I don't believe she is thinking of that kind of thing herself;—not with me at least. What she likes is the pretence of a mystery; and as it is amusing I don't see why a fellow should n't indulge her." But that determination was pronounced after two mutton chops at the Cock, between one and two o'clock in the morning. On the next day he was cooler and wiser. Greek he thought might be tedious, as he discovered that he would have to begin

again from the very alphabet. He would therefore abandon that idea. Greek was not the thing for him, but he would take up the sanitary condition of the poor in London. A fellow could be of some use in that way. In the mean time he would keep his appointment with Miss Demolines, simply because it was an appointment. A gentleman should always keep his word to a lady!

He did keep his appointment with Miss Demolines, and was with her almost precisely at the hour she had named. She received him with a mysterious tranquillity which almost perplexed him. He remembered, however, that the way to enjoy the society of Miss Demolines was to take her in all her moods with perfect seriousness, and was therefore very tranquil himself. On the present occasion she did not rise as he entered the room, and hardly spoke as she tendered to him the tips of her fingers to be touched. As she said almost nothing, he said nothing at all, but sank into a chair and stretched his legs out comfortably before him. It had been always understood between them that she was to bear the burden of the conversation.

"You 'll have a cup of tea?" she said.

"Yes;—if you do." Then the page brought the tea, and John Eames amused himself with swallowing three slices of very thin bread and butter.

"None for me,—thanks," said Madalina. "I rarely eat after dinner, and not often much then. I fancy that I should best like a world in which there was no eating."

"A good dinner is a very good thing," said John. And then there was again silence. He was aware that some great secret was to be told to him during this

evening, but he was much too discreet to show any curiosity upon that subject. He sipped his tea to the end, and then, having got up to put his cup down, stood on the rug with his back to the fire. "Have you been out to-day?" he asked.

"Indeed I have."

"And you are tired?"

"Very tired!"

"Then perhaps I had better not keep you up."

"Your remaining will make no difference in that respect. I don't suppose that I shall be in bed for the next four hours. But do as you like about going."

"I am in no hurry," said Johnny. Then he sat down again, stretched out his legs and made himself comfortable.

"I have been to see that woman," said Madalina after a pause.

"What woman?"

"Maria Clutterbuck,—as I must always call her; for I cannot bring myself to pronounce the name of that poor wretch who was done to death."

"He blew his brains out in delirium tremens," said Johnny.

"And what made him drink?" said Madalina, with emphasis. "Never mind. I decline altogether to speak of it. Such a scene as I have had! I was driven at last to tell her what I thought of her. Anything so callous, so heartless, so selfish, so stone-cold, and so childish, I never saw before! That Maria was childish and selfish I always knew;—but I thought there was some heart,—a vestige of heart. I found to-day that there was none,—none. If you please we won't speak of her any more."

"Certainly not," said Johnny.

"You need not wonder that I am tired and feverish."

"That sort of thing is fatiguing, I dare say. I don't know whether we do not lose more than we gain by those strong emotions."

"I would rather die and go beneath the sod at once, than live without them," said Madalina.

"It 's a matter of taste," said Johnny.

"It is there that that poor wretch is so deficient. She is thinking now, this moment, of nothing but her creature comforts. That tragedy has not even stirred her pulses."

"If her pulses were stirred ever so that would not make her happy."

"Happy! Who is happy? Are you happy?"

Johnny thought of Lily Dale and paused before he answered. No; certainly he was not happy. But he was not going to talk about his unhappiness to Miss Demolines! "Of course I am;—as jolly as a sandboy," he said.

"Mr. Eames," said Madalina, raising herself on her sofa, "if you cannot express yourself in language more suitable to the occasion and to the scene than that, I think that you had better——"

"Hold my tongue."

"Just so;—though I should not have chosen myself to use words so abruptly discourteous."

"What did I say;—jolly as a sandboy? There is nothing wrong in that. What I meant was, that I think that this world is a very good sort of world, and that a man can get along in it very well, if he minds his *p*'s and *q*'s."

"But suppose it 's a woman?"

"Easier still."

"And suppose she does not mind her *p*'s and *q*'s?"

"Women always do."

"Do they? Your knowledge of women goes as far as that, does it? Tell me fairly;—do you think you know anything about women?" Madalina, as she asked the question, looked full into his face, and shook her locks and smiled. When she shook her locks and smiled, there was a certain attraction about her of which John Eames was fully sensible. She could throw a special brightness into her eyes, which, though it probably betokened nothing truly beyond ill-natured mischief, seemed to convey a promise of wit and intellect.

"I don't mean to make any boast about it," said Johnny.

"I doubt whether you know anything. The pretty simplicity of your excellent Lily Dale has sufficed for you."

"Never mind about her," said Johnny impatiently.

"I do not mind about her in the least. But an insight into that sort of simplicity will not teach you the character of a real woman. You cannot learn the flavour of wines by sipping sherry and water. For myself I do not think that I am simple. I own it fairly. If you must have simplicity, I cannot be to your taste."

"Nobody likes partridge always," said Johnny, laughing.

"I understand you, sir. And though what you say is not complimentary, I am willing to forgive that fault for its truth. I don't consider myself to be

always partridge, I can assure you. I am as changeable as the moon."

"And as fickle?"

"I say nothing about that, sir. I leave you to find that out. It is a man's business to discover that for himself. If you really do know aught of women——"

"I did not say that I did."

"But if you do, you will perhaps have discovered that a woman may be as changeable as the moon, and yet as true as the sun;—that she may flit from flower to flower, quite unheeding while no passion exists, but that a passion fixes her at once. Do you believe me?" Now she looked into his eyes again, but did not smile and did not shake her locks.

"Oh, yes;—that 's true enough. And when they have a lot of children, then they become steady as milestones."

"Children!" said Madalina, getting up and walking about the room.

"They do have them, you know," said Johnny.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that I should be a milestone?"

"A finger-post," said Johnny, "to show a fellow the way he ought to go."

She walked twice across the room without speaking. Then she came and stood opposite to him, still without speaking,—and then she walked about again. "What could a woman better be than a finger-post, as you call it, with such a purpose?"

"Nothing better, of course;—though a milestone, to tell a fellow his distances, is very good."

"Psha!"

"You don't like the idea of being a milestone."

"No!"

"Then you can make up your mind to be a finger-post."

"John, shall I be a finger-post for you?" She stood and looked at him for a moment or two, with her eyes full of love, as though she were going to throw herself into his arms. And she would have done so, no doubt, instantly, had he risen to his legs. As it was, after having gazed at him for the moment with her love-laden eyes, she flung herself on the sofa, and hid her face among the cushions.

He had felt that it was coming for the last quarter of an hour,—and he had felt, also, that he was quite unable to help himself. He did not believe that he should ever be reduced to marrying Miss Demolines, but he did see plainly enough that he was getting into trouble, and yet, for his life, he could not help himself. The moth who flutters round the light knows that he is being burned, and yet he cannot fly away from it. When Madalina had begun to talk to him about women in general, and then about herself, and had told him that such a woman as herself,—even one so liable to the disturbance of violent emotions,—might yet be as true and honest as the sun, he knew that he ought to get up and make his escape. He did not exactly know how the catastrophe would come, but he was quite sure that if he remained there he would be called upon in some way for a declaration of his sentiments,—and that the call would be one which all his wit would not enable him to answer with any comfort. It was very well jesting about milestones, but every jest brought him nearer to the precipice. He perceived that however ludicrous might be the image

which his words produced, she was clever enough in some way to turn that image to her own purpose. He had called a woman a finger-post, and forthwith she had offered to come to him and be a finger-post to him for life! What was he to say to her? It was clear that he must say something. As at this moment she was sobbing violently, he could not pass the offer by as a joke. Women will say that his answer should have been very simple, and his escape very easy. But men will understand that it is not easy to reject even a Miss Demolines when she offers herself for matrimony. And, moreover,—as Johnny bethought himself at this crisis of his fate,—Lady Demolines was no doubt at the other side of the drawing-room door, ready to stop him, should he attempt to run away. In the mean time the sobs on the sofa became violent, and still more violent. He had not even yet made up his mind what to do, when Madalina, springing to her feet, stood before him, with her curls wildly waving and her arms extended. "Let it be as though it were unsaid," she exclaimed. John Eames had not the slightest objection; but, nevertheless, there was a difficulty even in this. Were he simply to assent to this latter proposition, it could not be but that the feminine nature of Miss Demolines would be outraged by so uncomplimentary an acquiescence. He felt that he ought at least to hesitate a little,—to make some pretence at closing upon the rich offer that had been made to him; only that were he to show any such pretence the rich offer would, no doubt, be repeated. His Madalina had twitted him in the earlier part of their interview with knowing nothing of the nature of women. He did know enough to feel assured that any false step

on his part now would lead him into very serious difficulties. "Let it be as though it were unsaid! Why, oh, why, have I betrayed myself?" exclaimed Madalina.

John now had risen from his chair, and coming up to her took her by the arm and spoke a word. "Compose yourself," he said. He spoke in his most affectionate voice, and he stood very close to her.

"How easy it is to bid me do that," said Madalina. "Tell the sea to compose itself when it rages!"

"Madalina!" said he.

"Well,—what of Madalina? Madalina has lost her own respect,—for ever."

"Do not say that."

"Oh, John,—why did you ever come here? Why? Why did we meet at that fatal woman's house? Or, meeting so, why did we not part as strangers? Sir, why have you come here to my mother's house day after day, evening after evening, if—— Oh, heavens, what am I saying? I wonder whether you will scorn me always?"

"I will never scorn you."

"And you will pardon me?"

"Madalina, there is nothing to pardon."

"And—you will love me?" Then, without waiting for any more encouraging reply,—unable, probably, to wait a moment longer, she sank upon his bosom. He caught her, of course,—and at that moment the drawing-room door was opened, and Lady Demolines entered the chamber. John Eames detected at a glance the skirt of the old white dressing-gown which he had seen whisking away on the occasion of his last visit at Porchester Terrace. But on the present occa-

sion Lady Demolines wore over it a short red opera cloak, and the cap on her head was ornamented with coloured ribbons.

"What is this," she said, "and why am I thus disturbed?" Madalina lay motionless in Johnny's arms, while the old woman glowered at him from under the coloured ribbons. "Mr. Eames, what is it that I behold?" she said.

"Your daughter, madam, seems to be a little unwell," said Johnny. Madalina kept her feet firm upon the ground, but did not for a moment lose her purchase against Johnny's waistcoat. Her respirations came very strong, but they came a good deal stronger when he mentioned the fact that she was not so well as she might be.

"Unwell!" said Lady Demolines. And John was stricken at the moment with a conviction that her ladyship must have passed the early years of her life upon the stage. "You would trifle with me, sir. Beware that you do not trifle with her,—with Madalina!"

"My mother," said Madalina; but still she did not give up her purchase, and the voice seemed to come half from her and half from Johnny. "Come to me, my mother." Then Lady Demolines hastened to her daughter, and Madalina between them was gradually laid at her length upon the sofa. The work of laying her out, however, was left almost entirely to the stronger arm of Mr. John Eames. "Thanks, mother," said Madalina; but she had not as yet opened her eyes, even for an instant.

"Perhaps I had better go now," said Johnny. The old woman looked at him with eyes which asked him

whether "he did n't wish he might get it" as plainly as though the words had been pronounced. "Of course I 'll wait if I can be of any service," said Johnny.

"I must know more of this, sir, before you leave the house," said Lady Demolines. He saw that between them both there might probably be a very bad quarter of an hour in store for him; but he swore to himself that no union of dragon and tigress should extract from him a word that could be taken as a promise of marriage.

The old woman was now kneeling by the head of the sofa, and Johnny was standing close by her side. Suddenly Madalina opened her eyes,—opened them very wide and gazed around her. Then slowly she raised herself on the sofa, and turned her face first upon her mother and then upon Johnny. "You here, mamma!" she said.

"Dearest one, I am near you. Be not afraid," said her ladyship.

"Afraid! Why should I be afraid? John! My own John! Mamma, he is my own." And she put out her arms to him, as though calling to him to come to her. Things were now very bad with John Eames, —so bad that he would have given a considerable lump out of Lord De Guest's legacy to be able to escape at once into the street. The power of a woman, when she chooses to use it recklessly, is, for the moment, almost unbounded.

"I hope you find yourself a little better," said John, struggling to speak, as though he were not utterly crushed by the occasion.

Lady Demolines slowly raised herself from her

knees, helping herself with her hands against the shoulder of the sofa,—for though still very clever, she was old and stiff,—and then offered both her hands to Johnny. Johnny cautiously took one of them, finding himself unable to decline them both. "My son!" she exclaimed; and before he knew where he was the old woman had succeeded in kissing his nose and his whiskers. "My son!" she said again.

Now the time had come for facing the dragon and the tigress in their wrath. If they were to be faced at all, the time for facing them had certainly arrived. I fear that John's heart sank low in his bosom at that moment. "I don't quite understand," he said, almost in a whisper. Madalina put out one arm towards him, and the fingers trembled. Her lips were opened, and the white row of interior ivory might be seen plainly; but at the present conjuncture of affairs she spoke not a word. She spoke not a word; but her arm remained stretched out towards him, and her fingers did not cease to tremble.

"You do not understand!" said Lady Demolines, drawing herself back, and looking, in her short open cloak, like a knight who has donned his cuirass, but has forgotten to put on his leg-gear. And she shook the bright ribbons of her cap, as a knight in his wrath shakes the crest of his helmet. "You do not understand, Mr. Eames! What is it, sir, that you do not understand?"

"There is some misconception, I mean," said Johnny.

"Mother!" said Madalina, turning her eyes from her recreant lover to her tender parent; trembling all over, but still keeping her hand extended. "Mother!"

"My darling! But leave him to me, dearest. Compose yourself."

"'T was the word that he said—this moment; before he pressed me to his heart."

"I thought you were fainting," said Johnny.

"Sir!" And Lady Demolines, as she spoke, shook her crest, and glared at him, and almost flew at him in her armour.

"It may be that nature has given way with me, and that I have been in a dream," said Madalina.

"That which mine eyes saw was no dream," said Lady Demolines. "Mr. Eames, I have given to you the sweetest name that can fall from an old woman's lips. I have called you my son."

"Yes, you did, I know. But, as I said before, there is some mistake. I know how proud I ought to be, and how happy, and all that kind of thing. But——" Then there came a screech from Madalina, which would have awakened the dead, had there been any dead in that house. The page and the cook, however, took no notice of it, whether they were awakened or not. And having screeched, Madalina stood erect upon the floor, and she also glared upon her recreant lover. The dragon and the tigress were there before him now, and he knew that it behoved him to look to himself. As he had a battle to fight, might it not be best to put a bold face upon it? "The truth is," said he, "that I don't understand this kind of thing at all."

"Not understand it, sir?" said the dragon.

"Leave him to me, mother," said the tigress, shaking her head again, but with a kind of shake differing from that which she had used before. "This is my business,

and I 'll have it out for myself. If he thinks I 'm going to put up with his nonsense he 's mistaken. I 've been straightforward and above-board with you, Mr. Eames, and I expect to be treated in the same way in return. Do you mean to tell my mother that you deny that we are engaged?"

"Well, yes; I do. I 'm very sorry, you know, if I seem to be uncivil——"

"It 's because I 've no brother," said the tigress. "He thinks that I have no man near me to protect me. But he shall find that I can protect myself. John Eames, why are you treating me like this?"

"I shall consult my cousin the serjeant to-morrow," said the dragon. "In the mean time he must remain in this house. I shall not allow the front door to be unlocked for him."

This, I think, was the bitterest moment of all to Johnny. To be confined all night in Lady Demolines's drawing-room would, of itself, be an intolerable nuisance. And then the absurdity of the thing, and the story that would go abroad! And what should he say to the dragon's cousin the serjeant, if the serjeant should be brought upon the field before he was able to escape from it? He did not know what a serjeant might not do to him in such circumstances. There was one thing no serjeant should do, and no dragon! Between them all they should never force him to marry the tigress. At this moment Johnny heard a tramp along the pavement, and he rushed to the window. Before the dragon or even the tigress could arrest him, he had thrown up the sash, and had appealed in his difficulty to the guardian of the night. "I say, old fellow," said Johnny, "don't you stir from that till I

tell you." The policeman turned his bull's-eye upon the window, and stood perfectly motionless. "Now, if you please, I 'll say good-night," said Johnny. But, as he spoke, he still held the open window in his hand.

"What means this violence in my house?" said the dragon.

"Mamma, you had better let him go," said the tigress. "We shall know where to find him."

"You will certainly be able to find me," said Johnny.

"Go," said the dragon, shaking her crest,—shaking all her armour at him, "dastard, go!"

"Policeman," shouted Johnny, while he still held the open window in his hand, "mind you don't stir till I come out." The bull's-eye was shifted a little, but the policeman spoke never a word.

"I wish you good-night, Lady Demolines," said Johnny. "Good-night, Miss Demolines." Then he left the window and made a run for the door. But the dragon was there before him.

"Let him go, mamma," said the tigress, as she closed the window. "We shall only have a rumpus."

"That will be all," said Johnny. "There is n't the slightest use in your trying to keep me here."

"And are we never to see you again?" said the tigress, almost languishing again with one eye.

"Well; no. What would be the use? No man likes to be shut in, you know."

"Go, then," said the tigress; "but if you think that this is to be the end of it, you 'll find yourself wonderfully mistaken. You poor, false, drivelling creature! Lily Dale won't touch you with a pair of tongs. It 's no use your going to her."

"Go away, sir, this moment, and don't contaminate my room an instant longer by your presence," said the dragon, who had observed through the window that the bull's-eye was still in full force before the house. Then John Eames withdrew, and descending into the hall made his way in the dark to the front door. For aught he knew there might still be treachery in regard to the lock; but his heart was comforted as he heard the footfall of the policeman on the doorstep. With much fumbling he succeeded at last in turning the key and drawing the bolt, and then he found himself at liberty in the street. Before he even spoke a word to the policeman he went out into the road and looked up at the window. He could just see the figure of the dragon's helmet as she was closing the shutters. It was the last he ever saw of Lady Demolines or of her daughter.

"What was it all about?" said the policeman.

"I don't know that I can just tell you," said Johnny, searching in his pocket-book for half a sovereign, which he tendered to the man. "There was a little difficulty, and I 'm obliged to you for waiting."

"There ain't nothing wrong?" said the man suspiciously, hesitating for a moment before he accepted the coin.

"Nothing on earth. I 'll wait with you, while you have the house opened and inquire, if you wish it. The truth is, somebody inside refused to have the door opened, and I did n't want to stay there all night."

"They 're a rummy couple if what I hear is true."

"They are a rummy couple," said Johnny.

"I suppose it 's all right," said the policeman, taking the money. And then John walked off home by him-

self, turning in his mind all the circumstances of his connection with Miss Demolines. Taking his own conduct as a whole, he was rather proud of it; but he acknowledged to himself that it would be well that he should keep himself free from the society of Madalinas for the future.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BARCHESTER CLOISTERS.

On the morning of the Sunday after the dean's return Mr. Harding was lying in his bed, and Posy was sitting on the bed beside him. It was manifest to all now that he became feebler and feebler from day to day, and that he would never leave his bed again. Even the archdeacon had shaken his head, and had acknowledged to his wife that the last day for her father was near at hand. It would very soon be necessary that he should select another vicar for St. Ewold's.

"Grandpa won't play cat's-cradle," said Posy, as Mrs. Arabin entered the room.

"No, darling,—not this morning," said the old man. He himself knew well enough that he would never play cat's-cradle again. Even that was over for him now.

"She teases you, papa," said Mrs. Arabin.

"No, indeed," said he. "Posy never teases me;" and he slowly moved his withered hand down outside the bed, so as to hold the child by her frock. "Let her stay with me, my dear."

"Dr. Fillgrave is downstairs, papa. You will see him, if he comes up?" Now Dr. Fillgrave was the leading physician of Barchester, and nobody of note in the city,—or for the matter of that in the eastern

division of the county,—was allowed to start upon the last great journey without some assistance from him as the hour of going drew nigh. I do not know that he had much reputation for prolonging life, but he was supposed to add a grace to the hour of departure. Mr. Harding had expressed no wish to see the doctor, —had rather declared his conviction that Dr. Fillgrave could be of no possible service to him. But he was not a man to persevere in his objection in opposition to the wishes of the friends around him; and as soon as the archdeacon had spoken a word on the subject he assented.

"Of course, my dear, I will see him."

"And Posy shall come back when he is gone," said Mrs. Arabin.

"Posy will do me more good than Dr. Fillgrave, I am quite sure;—but Posy shall go now." So Posy scrambled off the bed, and the doctor was ushered into the room.

"A day or two will see the end of it, Mr. Archdeacon;—I should say a day or two," said the doctor, as he met Dr. Grantly in the hall. "I should say that a day or two would see the end of it. Indeed, I will not undertake that twenty-four hours may not see the close of his earthly troubles. He has no suffering, no pain, no disturbing cause. Nature simply retires to rest." Dr. Fillgrave, as he said this, made a slow, falling motion with his hands, which alone on various occasions had been thought to be worth all the money paid for his attendance. "Perhaps you would wish that I should step in in the evening, Mr. Dean? As it happens, I shall be at liberty." The dean of course said that he would take it as an additional favour.

Neither the dean nor the archdeacon had the slightest belief in Dr. Fillgrave, and yet they would hardly have been contented that their father-in-law should have departed without him.

"Look at that man, now," said the archdeacon, when the doctor had gone, "who talks so glibly about nature going to rest. I 've known him all my life. He 's an older man by some months than our dear old friend upstairs. And he looks as if he were going to attend death-beds in Barchester for ever."

"I suppose he is right in what he tells us now?" said the dean.

"No doubt he is; but my belief does n't come from his saying it." Then there was a pause as the two church dignitaries sat together, doing nothing, feeling that the solemnity of the moment was such that it would be hardly becoming that they should even attempt to read. "His going will make an old man of me," said the archdeacon. "It will be different with you."

"It will make an old woman of Eleanor, I fear."

"I seem to have known him all my life," said the archdeacon. "I have known him ever since I left college; and I have known him as one man seldom knows another. There is nothing that he has done,—as I believe, nothing that he has thought,—with which I have not been cognisant. I feel sure that he never had an impure fancy in his mind, or a faulty wish in his heart. His tenderness has surpassed the tenderness of woman; and yet, when an occasion came for showing it, he had all the spirit of a hero. I shall never forget his resignation of the hospital, and all that I did and said to make him keep it."

"But he was right?"

"As Septimus Harding, he was, I think, right; but it would have been wrong in any other man. And he was right, too, about the deanery." For promotion had once come in Mr. Harding's way, and he, too, might have been Dean of Barchester. "The fact is, he never was wrong. He could n't go wrong. He lacked guile, and he feared God,—and a man who does both will never go far astray. I don't think he ever coveted aught in his life,—except a new case for his violoncello and somebody to listen to him when he played it." Then the archdeacon got up, and walked about the room in his enthusiasm; and, perhaps, as he walked some thoughts as to the sterner ambition of his own life passed through his mind. What things had he coveted? Had he lacked guile? He told himself that he had feared God,—but he was not sure that he was telling himself true even in that.

During the whole of the morning Mrs. Arabin and Mrs. Grantly were with their father, and during the greater part of the day there was absolute silence in the room. He seemed to sleep; and they, though they knew that in truth he was not sleeping, feared to disturb him by a word. About two Mrs. Baxter brought him his dinner, and he did rouse himself, and swallowed a spoonful or two of soup and half a glass of wine. At this time Posy came to him, and stood at the bedside, looking at him with her great wide eyes. She seemed to be aware that life had now gone so far with her dear old friend that she must not be allowed to sit upon his bed again. But he put his hand out to her, and she held it, standing quite still and silent. When Mrs. Baxter came to take away the tray, Posy's mother

got up and whispered a word to the child. Then Posy went away, and her eyes never beheld the old man again. That was a day which Posy will never forget, —not though she should live to be much older than her grandfather was when she thus left him.

"It is so sweet to have you both here," he said, when he had been lying silent for nearly an hour after the child had gone. Then they got up, and came and stood close to him. "There is nothing left for me to wish, my dears;—nothing." Not long after that he expressed a desire that the two husbands,—his two sons-in-law,—should come to him; and Mrs. Arabin went to them, and brought them to the room. As he took their hands he merely repeated the same words again. "There is nothing left for me to wish, my dears;—nothing." He never spoke again above his breath; but ever and anon his daughters, who watched him, could see that he was praying. The two men did not stay with him long, but returned to the gloom of the library. The gloom had almost become the darkness of night, and they were still sitting there without any light, when Mrs. Baxter entered the room. "The dear gentleman is no more," said Mrs. Baxter, with running eyes; and it seemed to the archdeacon that the very moment of his father's death had repeated itself. When Dr. Fillgrave called he was told that his services could be of no further use. "Dear, dear!" said the doctor. "We are all dust, Mrs. Baxter; are we not?" There were people in Barchester who pretended to know how often the doctor had repeated this little formula during the last thirty years.

There was no violence of sorrow in the house that night; but there were aching hearts, and one heart so

sore that it seemed that no cure for its anguish could ever reach it. "He has always been with me," Mrs. Arabin said to her husband, as he strove to console her. "It was not that I loved him better than Susan, but I have felt so much more of his loving tenderness. The sweetness of his voice has been in my ears almost daily since I was born."

They buried him in the cathedral which he had loved so well, and in which nearly all the work of his life had been done; and all Barchester was there to see him laid in his grave within the cloisters. There was no procession of coaches, no hearse, nor was there any attempt at funereal pomp. From the dean's side door, across the vaulted passage, and into the transept,—over the little step upon which he had so nearly fallen when last he made his way out of the building,—the coffin was carried on men's shoulders. It was but a short journey from his bedroom to his grave. But the bell had been tolling sadly all the morning, and the nave and the aisles and the transepts, close up to the door leading from the transept into the cloister, were crowded with those who had known the name and the figure and the voice of Mr. Harding as long as they had known anything. Up to this day no one would have said specially that Mr. Harding was a favourite in the town. He had never been forward enough in anything to become the acknowledged possessor of popularity. But, now that he was gone, men and women told each other how good he had been. They remembered the sweetness of his smile, and talked of loving little words which he had spoken to them,—either years ago or the other day, for his words had always been loving. The dean and the archdeacon

came first, shoulder to shoulder, and after them came their wives. I do not know that it was the proper order for mourning, but it was a touching sight to be seen, and was long remembered in Barchester. Painful as it was for them, the two women would be there, and the two sisters would walk together;—nor would they go before their husbands. Then there were the archdeacon's two sons,—for the Rev. Charles Grantly had come to Plumstead on the occasion. And in the vaulted passage which runs between the deanery and the end of the transept, all the chapter, with the choir, the prebendaries, with the fat old chancellor, the precentor, and the minor canons, down to the little choristers,—they all were there, and followed in at the transept door, two by two. And in the transept they were joined by another clergyman whom no one had expected to see that day. The bishop was there, looking old and worn, almost as though he were unconscious of what he was doing. Since his wife's death no one had seen him out of the palace or of the palace grounds till that day. But there he was,—and they made way for him into the procession behind the two ladies,—and the archdeacon, when he saw it, resolved that there should be peace in his heart, if peace might be possible.

They made their way into the cloisters, where the grave had been dug,—as many as might be allowed to follow. The place, indeed, was open to all who chose to come; but they who had only slightly known the man refrained from pressing upon those who had a right to stand around his coffin. But there was one other there whom the faithful chronicler of Barchester should mention. Before any other one had reached

the spot, the sexton and the verger had led in between them, among the graves beneath the cloisters, a blind man, very old, with a wondrous stoop, but who must have owned a grand stature before extreme old age had bent him, and they placed him sitting on a stone in the corner of the archway. But as soon as the shuffling of steps reached his ears, he raised himself with the aid of his stick, and stood during the service leaning against the pillar. The blind man was so old that he might almost have been Mr. Harding's father. This was John Bunce, a bedesman from Hiram's Hospital,—and none perhaps there had known Mr. Harding better than he had known him. When the earth had been thrown on to the coffin, and the service was over, and they were about to disperse, Mrs. Arabin went up to the old man, and taking his hand between hers whispered a word into his ear. "Oh, Miss Eleanor," he said. "Oh, Miss Eleanor!" Within a fortnight he also was lying within the cathedral precincts.

And so they buried Mr. Septimus Harding, formerly Warden of Hiram's Hospital in the city of Barchester, of whom the chronicler may say that that city never knew a sweeter gentleman or a better Christian.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LAST SCENE AT HOGGLESTOCK.

THE fortnight following Mr. Harding's death was passed very quietly at Hogglestock, for during that time no visitor made an appearance in the parish except Mr. Snapper on the Sundays. Mr. Snapper, when he had completed the service on the first of these Sundays, intimated to Mr. Crawley his opinion that probably that gentleman might himself wish to resume the duties on the following Sabbath. Mr. Crawley, however, courteously declined to do anything of the kind. He said that it was quite out of the question that he should do so without a direct communication made to him from the bishop, or by the bishop's order. The assizes had, of course, gone by, and all question of the trial was over. Nevertheless,—as Mr. Snapper said, —the bishop had not, as yet, given any order. Mr. Snapper was of opinion that the bishop in these days was not quite himself. He had spoken to the bishop about it, and the bishop had told him peevishly,—"I must say quite peevishly," Mr. Snapper had said,— that nothing was to be done at present. Mr. Snapper was not the less clearly of opinion that Mr. Crawley might resume his duties. To this, however, Mr. Crawley would not assent.

But even during the fortnight Mr. Crawley had not remained altogether neglected. Two days after Mr. Harding's death he had received a note from the dean in which he was advised not to resume the duties at Hogglestock for the present. "Of course you can understand that we have a sad house here at present," the dean had said. "But as soon as ever we are able to move in the matter we will arrange things for you as comfortably as we can. I will see the bishop myself." Mr. Crawley had no ambitious idea of any comfort which might accrue to him beyond that of an honourable return to his humble preferment at Hogglestock; but, nevertheless, he was in this case minded to do as the dean counselled him. He had submitted himself to the bishop, and he would wait till the bishop absolved him from his submission.

On the day after the funeral, the bishop had sent his compliments to the dean, with the expression of a wish that the dean would call upon him on any early day that might be convenient, with reference to the position of Mr. Crawley of Hogglestock. The note was in the bishop's own handwriting, and was as mild and civil as a bishop's note could be. Of course the dean named an early day for the interview; but it was necessary before he went to the bishop that he should discuss the matter with the archdeacon. If St. Ewold's might be given to Mr. Crawley, the Hogglestock difficulties would all be brought to an end. The archdeacon, after the funeral, had returned to Plumstead, and thither the dean went to him before he saw the bishop. He did succeed,—he and Mrs. Grantly between them,—but with very great difficulty, in obtaining a conditional promise. They had both thought

that when the archdeacon became fully aware that Grace was to be his daughter-in-law, he would at once have been delighted to have an opportunity of extricating from his poverty a clergyman with whom it was his fate to be so closely connected. But he fought the matter on twenty different points. He declared at first that as it was his primary duty to give to the people of St. Ewold's the best clergyman he could select for them, he could not give the preferment to Mr. Crawley, because Mr. Crawley, in spite of all his zeal and piety, was a man so quaint in his manners and so eccentric in his mode of speech as not to be the best clergyman whom he could select. "What is my old friend Thorne to do with a man in his parish who won't drink a glass of wine with him?" For Ullathorne, the seat of that Mr. Wilfred Thorne who had been so guilty in the matter of the foxes, was situated in the parish of St. Ewold's. When Mrs. Grantly proposed that Mr. Thorne's consent should be asked, the archdeacon became very angry. He had never heard so unecclesiastical a proposition in his life. It was his special duty to do the best he could for Mr. Thorne, but it was specially his duty to do so without consulting Mr. Thorne about it. As the archdeacon's objection had been argued simply on the point of the glass of wine, both the dean and Mrs. Grantly thought that he was unreasonable. But they had their point to gain, and therefore they only flattered him. They were sure that Mr. Thorne would like to have a clergyman in the parish who would himself be closely connected with the archdeacon. Then Dr. Grantly alleged that he might find himself in a trap. What if he conferred the living of St. Ewold's on Mr. Crawley,

and after all there should be no marriage between his son and Grace?

"Of course they 'll be married," said Mrs. Grantly.

"It 's all very well for you to say that, my dear; but the whole family are so queer that there is no knowing what the girl may do. She may take up some other fad now and refuse him point blank."

"She has never taken up any fad," said Mrs. Grantly, who now mounted almost to wrath in defence of her future daughter-in-law, "and you are wrong to say that she has. She has behaved beautifully;—as nobody knows better than you do." Then the archdeacon gave way so far as to promise that St. Ewold's should be offered to Mr. Crawley as soon as Grace Crawley was in truth engaged to Harry Grantly.

After that, the dean went to the palace. There had never been any quarrelling between the bishop and the dean, either direct or indirect;—nor, indeed, had the dean ever quarrelled even with Mrs. Proudie. But he had belonged to the anti-Proudie faction. He had been brought into the diocese by the Grantly interest; and therefore, during Mrs. Proudie's life-time, he had always been accounted among the enemies. There had never been any real intimacy between the houses. Each house had been always asked to dine with the other house once a year; but it had been understood that such dinings were ecclesiastico-official, and not friendly. There had been the same outside diocesan civility between even the palace and Plumstead. But now, when the great chieftain of the palace was no more, and the strength of the palace faction was gone, peace, or perhaps something more than peace,—amity,

perhaps, might be more easily arranged with the dean than with the archdeacon. In preparation for such arrangements the bishop had gone to Mr. Harding's funeral.

And now the dean went to the palace at the bishop's behest. He found his lordship alone, and was received with almost reverential courtesy. He thought that the bishop was looking wonderfully aged since he last saw him, but did not perhaps take into account the absence of clerical sleekness which was incidental to the bishop's private life in his private room, and perhaps in a certain measure to his recent great affliction. The dean had been in the habit of regarding Dr. Proudie as a man almost young for his age,—having been in the habit of seeing him at his best, clothed in authority, redolent of the throne, conspicuous as regarded his apron and outward signs of episcopality. Much of all this was now absent. The bishop, as he rose to greet the dean, shuffled with his old slippers, and his hair was not brushed so becomingly as used to be the case when Mrs. Proudie was always near him.

It was necessary that a word should be said by each as to the loss which the other had suffered. "Mr. Dean," said his lordship, "allow me to offer you my condolements in regard to the death of that very excellent clergyman and most worthy gentleman, your father-in-law."

"Thank you, my lord. He was excellent and worthy. I do not suppose that I shall live to see any man who was more so. You also have a great,—a terrible loss."

"Oh, Mr. Dean, yes; yes, indeed, Mr. Dean. That was a loss."

"And hardly past the prime of life?"

"Ah, yes;—just fifty-six,—and so strong! Was she not? At least, everybody thought so. And yet she was gone in a minute;—gone in a minute. I have n't held up my head since, Mr. Dean."

"It was a great loss, my lord; but you must struggle to bear it."

"I do struggle. I am struggling. But it makes one feel so lonely in this great house. Ah, me! I often wish, Mr. Dean, that it had pleased Providence to have left me in some humble parsonage, where duty would have been easier than it is here. But I will not trouble you with all that. What are we to do, Mr. Dean, about this poor Mr. Crawley?"

"Mr. Crawley is a very old friend of mine, and a very dear friend."

"Is he? Ah! A very worthy man, I am sure, and one who has been much tried by undeserved adversities."

"Most severely tried, my lord."

"Sitting among the potsherds, like Job; has he not, Mr. Dean? Well; let us hope that all that is over. When this accusation about the robbery was brought against him, I found myself bound to interfere."

"He has no complaint to make on that score."

"I hope not. I have not wished to be harsh, but what could I do, Mr. Dean? They told me that the civil authorities found the evidence so strong against him that it could not be withstood."

"It was very strong."

"And we thought that he should at least be relieved, and we sent for Dr. Tempest, who is his rural dean." Then the bishop, remembering all the circumstances

of that interview with Dr. Tempest,—as to which he had ever felt assured that one of the results of it was the death of his wife, whereby there was no longer any "we" left in the palace of Barchester,—sighed piteously, looking up at the dean with hopeless face.

"Nobody doubts, my lord, that you acted for the best."

"I hope we did. I think we did. And now what shall we do? He has resigned his living, both to you and to me, as I hear,—you being the patron. It will simply be necessary, I think, that he should ask to have the letters cancelled. Then, as I take it, there need be no reinstitution. You cannot think, Mr. Dean, how much I have thought about it all."

Then the dean unfolded his budget, and explained to the bishop how he hoped that the living of St. Ewold's, which was, after some ecclesiastical fashion, attached to the rectory of Plumstead, and which was now vacant by the demise of Mr. Harding, might be conferred by the archdeacon upon Mr. Crawley. It was necessary to explain also that this could not be done quite immediately, and in doing this the dean encountered some little difficulty. The archdeacon, he said, wished to be allowed another week to think about it; and therefore perhaps provision for the duties at Hogglestock might yet be made for a few Sundays. The bishop, the dean said, might easily understand that, after what had occurred, Mr. Crawley would hardly wish to go again into that pulpit, unless he did so as resuming duties which would necessarily be permanent with him. To all this the bishop assented, but he was apparently struck with much wonder at the choice made by the archdeacon. "I should

have thought, Mr. Dean," he said, "that Mr. Crawley was the last man to have suited the archdeacon's choice."

"The archdeacon and I married sisters, my lord."

"Oh, ah! yes. And he puts the nomination of St. Ewold's at your disposition. I am sure I shall be delighted to institute so worthy a gentleman as Mr. Crawley." Then the dean took his leave of the bishop, —as will we also. Poor, dear bishop! I am inclined to think that he was right in his regrets as to the little parsonage. Not that his failure at Barchester, and his present consciousness of lonely incompetence, were mainly due to any positive inefficiency on his own part. He might have been a sufficiently good bishop, had it not been that Mrs. Proudie was so much more than a sufficiently good bishop's wife. We will now say farewell to him, with a hope that the lopped tree may yet become green again, and to some extent fruitful, although all its beautiful head and richness of waving foliage have been taken from it.

About a week after this Henry Grantly rode over from Cosby Lodge to Hogglestock. It has been just said that though the assizes had passed by, and though all question of Mr. Crawley's guilt was now set aside, no visitor had of late made his way over to Hogglestock. I fancy that Grace Crawley forgot, in the fulness of her memory as to other things, that Mr. Harding, of whose death she heard, had been her lover's grandfather,—and that therefore there might possibly be some delay. Had there been much said between the mother and the daughter about the lover, no doubt all this would have been explained; but Grace was very reticent, and there were other matters in the

Hogglestock household which in those days occupied Mrs. Crawley's mind. How were they again to begin life? For, in very truth, life as it had existed with them before had been brought to an end. But Grace remembered well the sort of compact which existed between her and her lover;—the compact which had been made in very words between herself and her lover's father. Complete in her estimation as had been the heaven opened to her by Henry Grantly's offer, she had refused it all,—lest she should bring disgrace upon him. But the disgrace was not certain; and if her father should be made free from it, then,—then,—then Henry Grantly ought to come to her and be at her feet with all the expedition possible to him. That was her reading of the compact. She had once declared, when speaking of the possible disgrace which might attach itself to her family and to her name, that her poverty did not "signify a bit." She was not ashamed of her father,—only of the accusation against her father. Therefore she had hurried home when that accusation was withdrawn, desirous that her lover should tell her of his love,—if he chose to repeat such telling,—amidst all the poor things of Hogglestock, and not among the chairs and tables and good dinners of luxurious Framley. Mrs. Robarts had given a true interpretation to Lady Lufton of the haste which Grace had displayed. But she need not have been in so great a hurry. She had been at home already above a fortnight, and as yet he had made no sign. At last she said a word to her mother. "Might I not ask to go back to Miss Prettyman's now, mamma?"

"I think, dear, you had better wait till things are a

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little settled. Papa is to hear again from the dean very soon. You see they are all in a great sorrow at Barchester about poor Mr. Harding's death."

"Grace," said Jane, rushing into the house almost speechless, at that moment, "here he is!—on horseback."

I do not know why Jane should have talked about Major Grantly as simply "he." There had been no conversation between the sisters to justify her in such a mode of speech. Grace had not a moment to put two and two together, so that she might realise the meaning of what her mother had said; but nevertheless, she felt at the moment that the man, coming as he had done now, had come with all commendable speed. How foolish had she been with her wretched impatience!

There he was, certainly, tying his horse up to the railing. "Mamma, what am I to say to him?"

"Nay, dear; he is your own friend,—of your own making. You must say what you think fit."

"You are not going?"

"I think we had better, dear." Then she went, and Jane with her, and Jane opened the door for Major Grantly. Mr. Crawley himself was away, at Hoggle End, and did not return till after Major Grantly had left the parsonage. Jane, as she greeted the grand gentleman, whom she had seen and no more than seen, hardly knew what to say to him. When, after a minute's hesitation, she told him that Grace was in there, —pointing to the sitting-room door,—she felt that she had been very awkward. Henry Grantly, however, did not, I think, feel her awkwardness, being conscious of some small difficulties of his own. When, however,

he found that Grace was alone, the task before him at once lost half its difficulties.

"Grace," he said, "am I right to come to you now?"

"I do not know," she said. "I cannot tell."

"Dearest Grace, there is no reason on earth now why you should not be my wife."

"Is there not?"

"I know of none,—if you can love me. You saw my father?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"And you heard what he said?"

"I hardly remember what he said;—but he kissed me, and I thought he was very kind."

What little attempt Henry Grantly then made, thinking that he could not do better than follow closely the example of so excellent a father, need not be explained with minuteness. But I think that his first effort was not successful. Grace was embarrassed and retreated, and it was not till she had been compelled to give a direct answer to a direct question that she submitted to allow his arm round her waist. But when she had answered that question she was almost more humble than becomes a maiden who has just been wooed and won. A maiden who has been wooed and won generally thinks that it is she who has conquered, and chooses to be triumphant accordingly. But Grace was even mean enough to thank her lover. "I do not know why you should be so good to me," she said.

"Because I love you," said he, "better than all the world."

"But why should you be so good to me as that? Why should you love me? I am such a poor thing for a man like you to love."

"I have had the wit to see that you are not a poor thing, Grace; and it is thus that I have earned my treasure. Some girls are poor things and some are rich treasures."

"If love can make me a treasure, I will be your treasure. And if love can make me rich, I will be rich for you." After that I think he had no difficulty in following in his father's footsteps.

After a while Mrs. Crawley came in, and there was much pleasant talking among them, while Henry Grantly sat happily with his love, as though waiting for Mr. Crawley's return. But though he was there nearly all the morning, Mr. Crawley did not return. "I think he likes the brickmakers better than anybody in all the world, except ourselves," said Grace. "I don't know how he will manage to get on without his friends." Before Grace had said this, Major Grantly had told all his story, and had produced a letter from his father, addressed to Mr. Crawley, of which the reader shall have a copy, although at this time the letter had not been opened. The letter was as follows:—

"Plumstead Rectory, May, 186—.

"My Dear Sir,—You will no doubt have heard that Mr. Harding, the vicar of St. Ewold's, who was the father of my wife and of Mrs. Arabin, has been taken from us. The loss to us of so excellent and so dear a man has been very great. I have conferred with my friend the Dean of Barchester as to a new nomination, and I venture to request your acceptance of the preferment, if it should suit you to move from Hogglestock to St. Ewold's. It may be as well that I should state plainly my reasons for making this offer

to a gentleman with whom I am not personally acquainted. Mr. Harding, on his death-bed, himself suggested it, moved thereto by what he had heard of the cruel and undeserved persecution to which you have lately been subjected; as also,—on which point he was very urgent in what he said,—by the character which you bear in the diocese for zeal and piety. I may also add, that the close connection which, as I understand, is likely to take place between your family and mine, has been an additional reason for my taking this step, and the long friendship which has existed between you and my wife's brother-in-law, the Dean of Barchester, is a third.

"St. Ewold's is worth 350*l.* per annum, besides the house, which is sufficiently commodious for a moderate family. The population is about twelve hundred, of which more than a half consists of persons dwelling in an outskirt of the city,—for the parish runs almost into Barchester.

"I shall be glad to have your reply with as little delay as may suit your convenience, and in the event of your accepting the offer,—which I sincerely trust you may be enabled to do,—I shall hope to have an early opportunity of seeing you, with reference to your institution to the parish.

"Allow me also to say to you and to Mrs. Crawley that, if we have been correctly informed as to that other event to which I have alluded, we both hope that we may have an early opportunity of making ourselves personally acquainted with the parents of a young lady who is to be so dear to us. As I have met your daughter, I may perhaps be allowed to send her my kindest love. If, as my daughter-in-law, she comes

up to the impression which she gave me at our first meeting, I, at any rate, shall be satisfied.

"I have the honour to be, my dear sir,

"Your most faithful servant,

"THEOPHILUS GRANTLY."

This letter the archdeacon had shown to his wife, by whom it had not been very warmly approved. Nothing, Mrs. Grantly had said, could be prettier than what the archdeacon had said about Grace. Mrs. Crawley, no doubt, would be satisfied with that. But Mr. Crawley was such a strange man! "He will be stranger than I take him to be if he does not accept St. Ewold's," said the archdeacon. "But in offering it," said Mrs. Grantly, "you have not said a word of your own high opinion of his merits." "I have not a very high opinion of them," said the archdeacon. "Your father had, and I have said so. And as I have the most profound respect for your father's opinion in such a matter, I have permitted that to overcome my own hesitation." This was pretty from the husband to the wife as it regarded her father, who had now gone from them; and, therefore, Mrs. Grantly accepted it without further argument. The reader may probably feel assured that the archdeacon had never, during their joint lives, acted in any church matter upon the advice given to him by Mr. Harding; and it was probably the case also that the living would have been offered to Mr. Crawley if nothing had been said by Mr. Harding on the subject; but it did not become Mrs. Grantly even to think of all this. The archdeacon, having made his gracious speech about her father, was not again asked to alter his letter. "I

suppose he will accept it," said Mrs. Grantly. "I should think that he probably may," said the archdeacon.

So Grace, knowing what was the purport of the letter, sat with it between her fingers, while her lover sat beside her, full of various plans for the future. This was his first lover's present to her;—and what a present it was! Comfort, and happiness, and a pleasant home for all her family. "St. Ewold's is n't the best house in the world," said the major, "because it is old, and what I call piecemeal; but it is very pretty, and certainly nice." "That is just the sort of parsonage that I dream about," said Jane. "And the garden is pleasant with old trees," said the major. "I always dream about old trees," said Jane, "only I 'm afraid I 'm too old myself to be let to climb up them now." Mrs. Crawley said very little, but sat by with her eyes full of tears. Was it possible that, at last, before the world had closed upon her, she was to enjoy something again of the comforts which she had known in her early years, and to be again surrounded by those decencies of life which of late had been almost banished from her home by poverty!

Their various plans for the future,—for the immediate future,—were very startling. Grace was to go over at once to Plumstead, whither Edith had been already transferred from Cosby Lodge. That was all very well; there was nothing very startling or impracticable in that. The Framley ladies, having none of those doubts as to what was coming which had for a while perplexed Grace herself, had taken little liberties with her wardrobe, which enabled such a visit to be made without overwhelming difficulties. But the major was

equally eager,—or at any rate equally imperious,—in his requisition for a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Crawley themselves to Plumstead rectory. Mrs. Crawley did not dare to put forward the plain, unadorned reasons against it, as Mr. Crawley had done when discussing the subject of a visit to the deanery. Nor could she quite venture to explain that she feared that the archdeacon and her husband would hardly mix well together in society. With whom, indeed, was it possible that her husband should mix well, after his long and hardly tried seclusion? She could only plead that both her husband and herself were so little used to going out that she feared,—she feared,—she feared she knew not what. "We 'll get over all that," said the major, almost contemptuously. "It is only the first plunge that is disagreeable." Perhaps the major did not know how very disagreeable a first plunge may be!

At two o'clock Henry Grantly got up to go. "I should very much like to have seen him, but I fear I cannot wait longer. As it is, the patience of my horse has been surprising." Then Grace walked out with him to the gate, and put her hand upon his bridle as he mounted, and thought how wonderful was the power of Fortune, that the goddess should have sent so gallant a gentleman to be her lord and her lover. "I declare I don't quite believe it even yet," she said, in the letter which she wrote to Lily Dale that night.

It was four before Mr. Crawley returned to his house, and then he was very weary. There were many sick in these days at Hoggle End, and he had gone from cottage to cottage through the day. Giles Hoggett was almost unable to work from rheumatism, but still was of opinion that doggedness might carry him

on. "It 's been a deal o' service to you, Muster Crawley," he said. "We hears about it all. If you had n't a-been dogged, where 'd you a-been now?" With Giles Hoggett and others he had remained all the day, and now he came home weary and beaten. "You 'll tell him first," Grace had said, "and then I 'll give him the letter." The wife was the first to tell him of the good fortune that was coming.

He flung himself into the old chair as soon as he entered, and asked for some bread and tea. "Jane has already gone for it, dear," said his wife. "We have had a visitor here, Josiah."

"A visitor,—what visitor?"

"Grace's own friend,—Henry Grantly."

"Grace, come here, that I may kiss you and bless you," he said very solemnly. "It would seem that the world is going to be very good to you."

"Papa, you must read this letter first."

"Before I kiss my own darling?" Then she knelt at his feet. "I see," he said, taking the letter; "it is from your lover's father. Peradventure he signifies his consent, which would be surely needful before such a marriage would be seemly."

"It is n't about me, papa, at all."

"Not about you? If so, that would be most unpromising. But, in any case, you are my best darling." Then he kissed her and blessed her, and slowly opened the letter. His wife had now come close to him, and was standing over him, touching him, so that she also could read the archdeacon's letter. Grace, who was still in front of him, could see the working of his face as he read it; but even she could not tell whether he was gratified, or offended, or dismayed. When he had

got as far as the first offer of the presentation, he ceased reading for a while, and looked round about the room as though lost in thought. "Let me see what further he writes to me," he then said; and after that he continued the letter slowly to the end. "Nay, my child, you were in error in saying that he wrote not about you. 'T is in writing of you he has put some real heart into his words. He writes as though his home would be welcome to you."

"And does he not make St. Ewold's welcome to you, papa?"

"He makes me welcome to accept it,—if I may use the word after the ordinary and somewhat faulty parlance of mankind."

"And you will accept it,—of course?"

"I know not that, my dear. The acceptance of a cure of souls is a thing not to be decided on in a moment,—as is the colour of a garment or the shape of a toy. Nor would I condescend to take this thing from the archdeacon's hands, if I thought that he bestowed it simply that the father of his daughter-in-law might no longer be accounted poor."

"Does he say that, papa?"

"He gives it as a collateral reason, basing his offer first on the kindly expressed judgment of one who is now no more. Then he refers to the friendship of the dean. If he believed that the judgment of his late father-in-law in so weighty a matter were the best to be relied upon of all that were at his command, then he would have done well to trust to it. But in such case he should have bolstered up a good ground for action with no collateral supports, which are weak,—and worse than weak. However, it shall have my

best consideration, whereunto I hope that wisdom will be given me where only such wisdom can be had."

"Josiah," said his wife to him, when they were alone, "you will not refuse it?"

"Not willingly,—not if it may be accepted. Alas! you need not urge me, when the temptation is so strong!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. CRAWLEY IS CONQUERED.

It was more than a week before the archdeacon received a reply from Mr. Crawley, during which time the dean had been over at Hogglestock more than once, as had also Mrs. Arabin and Lady Lufton the younger,—and there had been letters written without end, and the archdeacon had been nearly beside himself. "A man who pretends to conscientious scruples of that kind is not fit to have a parish," he had said to his wife. His wife understood what he meant, and I trust that the reader may also understand it. In the ordinary cutting of blocks a very fine razor is not an appropriate instrument. The archdeacon, moreover, loved the temporalities of the church as temporalities. The church was beautiful to him because one man by interest might have a thousand a year, while another man equally good, but without interest, could only have a hundred. And he liked the men who had the interest a great deal better than the men who had it not. He had been willing to admit this poor perpetual curate, who had so long been kept out in the cold, within the pleasant circle which was warm with ecclesiastical good things, and the man hesitated,—because of scruples, as the dean told him! "I always button

up my pocket when I hear of scruples," the archdeacon said.

But at last Mr. Crawley condescended to accept St. Ewold's.

"Reverend and Dear Sir" (he said in his letter),—"For the personal benevolence of the offer made to me in your letter of the — instant, I beg to tender you my most grateful thanks; as also for your generous kindness to me, in telling me of the high praise bestowed upon me by a gentleman who is now no more,—whose character I have esteemed and whose good opinion I value. There is, methinks, something inexpressibly dear to me in the recorded praise of the dead. For the further instance of the friendship of the Dean of Barchester, I am also thankful.

"Since the receipt of your letter I have doubted much as to my fitness for the work you have proposed to entrust to me,—not from any feeling that the parish of St. Ewold's may be beyond my intellectual power, but because the latter circumstances of my life have been of a nature so strange and perplexing, that they have left me somewhat in doubt as to my own aptitude for going about among men without giving offence and becoming a stumbling-block.

"Nevertheless, reverend and dear sir, if after this confession on my part of a certain faulty demeanour with which I know well that I am afflicted, you are still willing to put the parish into my hands, I will accept the charge,—instigated to do so by the advice of all whom I have consulted on the subject; and in thus accepting it, I hereby pledge myself to vacate it at a month's warning, should I be called upon by you to

do so at any period within the next two years. Should I be so far successful during those twenty-four months as to have satisfied both yourself and myself, I may then perhaps venture to regard the preferment as my own in perpetuity for life.

"I have the honour to be, reverend and dear sir,

"Your most humble and faithful servant,

"JOSIAH CRAWLEY."

"Psha!" said the archdeacon, who professed that he did not at all like the letter. "I wonder what he would say if I sent him a month's notice at next Michaelmas?"

"I 'm sure he would go," said Mrs. Grantly.

"The more fool he," said the archdeacon.

At this time Grace was at the parsonage in the seventh heaven of happiness. The archdeacon was never rough to her, nor did he make any of his harsh remarks about her father in her presence. Before her St. Ewold's was spoken of as the home that was to belong to the Crawleys for the next twenty years. Mrs. Grantly was very loving with her, lavishing upon her pretty presents, and words that were prettier than the presents. Grace's life had hitherto been so destitute of those prettinesses and softnesses, which can hardly be had without money though money alone will not purchase them, that it seemed to her now that the heavens rained graciousness upon her. It was not that the archdeacon's watch, or her lover's chain, or Mrs. Grantly's locket, or the little toy from Italy which Mrs. Arabin brought to her from the treasures of the deanery, filled her heart with undue exultation. It was not that she revelled in her new delights of silver and gold

and shining gems: but that the silver and gold and shining gems were constant indications to her that things had changed, not only for her, but for her father and mother, and brother and sister. She felt now more sure than ever that she could not have enjoyed her love had she accepted her lover while the disgrace of the accusation against her father remained. But now,—having waited till that had passed away, everything was a new happiness to her.

At last it was settled that Mr. and Mrs. Crawley were to come to Plumstead,—and they came. It would be too long to tell now how gradually had come about that changed state of things which made such a visit possible. Mr. Crawley had at first declared that such a thing was quite out of the question. If St. Ewold's was to depend upon it St. Ewold's must be given up. And I think that it would have been impossible for him to go direct from Hogglestock to Plumstead. But it fell out after this wise.

Mr. Harding's curate at St. Ewold's was nominated to Hogglestock, and the dean urged upon his friend Crawley the expediency of giving up the house as quickly as he could do so. Gradually at this time Mr. Crawley had been forced into a certain amount of intimacy with the haunts of men. He had been twice or thrice at Barchester, and had lunched with the dean. He had been at Framley for an hour or two, and had been forced into some communication with old Mr. Thorne, the squire of his new parish. The end of this had been that he had at last consented to transfer himself and wife and daughter to the deanery for a fortnight. He had preached one farewell sermon at Hog-

glestock,—not, as he told his audience, as their pastor, which he had ceased to be now for some two or three months,—but as their old and loving friend, to whom the use of his former pulpit had been lent, that he might express himself thus among them for the last time. His sermon was very short, and was preached without book or notes,—but he never once paused for a word or halted in the string or rhythm of his discourse. The dean was there, and declared to him afterwards that he had not given him credit for such powers of utterance. "Any man can utter out of a full heart," Crawley had answered. "In this trumpery affair about myself, my heart is full! If we could only have our hearts full in other matters, our utterances thereanent would receive more attention." To all of which the dean made no reply.

On the day after this the Crawleys took their final departure from Hogglestock, all the brickmakers from Hoggle End having assembled on the occasion, with a purse containing seventeen pounds seven shillings and sixpence, which they insisted on presenting to Mr. Crawley, and as to which there was a little difficulty. And at the deanery they remained for a fortnight. How Mrs. Crawley, under the guidance of Mrs. Arabin, had there so far trenched upon the revenues of St. Ewold's as to provide for her husband and herself raiment fitting for the worldly splendour of Plumstead, need not here be told in detail. Suffice it to say, the raiment was forthcoming, and Mr. Crawley found himself to be the perplexed possessor of a black dress-coat, in addition to the long frock, coming nearly to his feet, which was provided for his daily wear. Touching this

garment there had been some discussion between the dean and the new vicar. The dean had desired that it should be curtailed in length. The vicar had remonstrated,—but still with something of the weakness of compliance in his eye. Then the dean had persisted. "Surely the price of the cloth wanted to perfect the comeliness of the garment cannot be much," said the vicar, almost woefully. After that the dean relented, and the comeliness of the coat was made perfect. The new black long frock, I think Mr. Crawley liked; but the dress-coat, with the suit complete, perplexed him sorely.

With his new coats, and something, also, of new manners, he and his wife went over to Plumstead, leaving Jane at the deanery with Mrs. Arabin. The dean also went to Plumstead. They arrived there not much before dinner, and as Grace was there before them the first moments were not so bad. Before Mr. Crawley had had time to feel himself lost in the drawing-room, he was summoned away to prepare himself for dinner, —for dinner, and for the coat, which at the deanery he had been allowed to leave unworn. "I would with all my heart that I might retire to rest," he said to his wife, when the ceremony had been perfected.

"Do not say so. Go down and take your place with them, and speak your mind with them,—as you so well know how. Who among them can do it so well?"

"I have been told," said Mr. Crawley, "that you shall take a cock which is lord of the farm-yard,—the cock of all that walk,—and when you have daubed his feathers with mud, he shall be thrashed by every dung-hill coward. I say not that I was ever the cock of the

walk, but I know that they have daubed my feathers." Then he went down among the other poultry into the farm-yard.

At dinner he was very silent, answering, however, with a sort of graceful stateliness, any word that Mrs. Grantly addressed to him. Mr. Thorne, from Ullathorne, was there also, to meet his new vicar, as was also Mr. Thorne's very old sister, Miss Monica Thorne. And Lady Anne Grantly was there,—she having come with the expressed intention that the wives of the two brothers should know each other,—but with a warmer desire, I think, of seeing Mr. Crawley, of whom the clerical world had been talking much since some notice of the accusation against him had become general. There were, therefore, ten or twelve at the dinner-table, and Mr. Crawley had not made one at such a board certainly since his marriage. All went fairly smooth with him till the ladies left the room; for though Lady Anne, who sat at his left hand, had perplexed him somewhat with clerical questions, he had found that he was not called upon for much more than monosyllabic responses. But in his heart he feared the archdeacon, and he felt that when the ladies were gone the archdeacon would not leave him alone in his silence.

As soon as the door was closed, the first subject mooted was that of the Plumstead fox, which had been so basely murdered on Mr. Thorne's ground. Mr. Thorne had confessed the iniquity, had dismissed the murderous keeper, and all was serene. But the greater on that account was the feasibility of discussing the question, and the archdeacon had a good deal to say about it. Then Mr. Thorne turned to the new vicar, and asked him whether foxes abounded in Hogglestock.

Had he been asked as to the rats or the moles, he would have known more about it.

"Indeed, sir, I know not whether or no there be any foxes in the parish of Hogglestock. I do not remember me that I ever saw one. It is an animal whose habits I have not watched."

"There is an earth at Hoggle Bushes," said the major; "and I never knew it without a litter."

"I think I know the domestic whereabouts of every fox in Plumstead," said the archdeacon, with an ill-natured intention of astonishing Mr. Crawley.

"Of foxes with two legs our friend is speaking, without doubt," said the vicar of St. Ewold's, with an attempt at grim pleasantry.

"Of them we have none at Plumstead. No,—I was speaking of the dear old fellow with the brush. Pass the bottle, Mr. Crawley. Won't you fill your glass?" Mr. Crawley passed the bottle, but would not fill his glass. Then the dean, looking up slily, saw the vexation written in the archdeacon's face. The parson whom the archdeacon feared most of all parsons was the parson who would n't fill his glass.

Then the subject was changed. "I 'm told that the bishop has at last made his reappearance on his throne," said the archdeacon.

"He was in the cathedral last Sunday," said the dean.

"Does he ever mean to preach again?"

"He never did preach very often," said the dean.

"A great deal too often, from all that people say," said the archdeacon. "I never heard him myself, and never shall, I dare say. You have heard him, Mr. Crawley?"

"I have never had that good fortune, Mr. Archdeacon. But living as I shall now do, so near to the city, I may perhaps be enabled to attend the cathedral service on some holyday of the church, which may not require prayers in my own rural parish. I think that the clergy of the diocese should be acquainted with the opinions, and with the voice, and with the very manner and words of their bishop. As things are now done, this is not possible. I could wish that there were occasions on which a bishop might assemble his clergy, and preach to them sermons adapted to their use."

"What do you call a bishop's charge, then?"

"It is usually in the printed form that I have received it," said Mr. Crawley.

"I think we have quite enough of that kind of thing," said the archdeacon.

"He is a man whose conversation is not pleasing to me," Mr. Crawley said to his wife that night.

"Do not judge of him too quickly, Josiah," his wife said. "There is so much of good in him! He is kind, and generous, and I think affectionate."

"But he is of the earth, earthy. When you and the other ladies had retired, the conversation at first fell on the habits and value of—foxes. I have been informed that in these parts the fox is greatly prized, as without a fox to run before the dogs, that scampering over the country which is called hunting, and which delights by the quickness and perhaps by the peril of the exercise, is not relished by the riders. Of the wisdom or taste herein displayed by the hunters of the day I say nothing. But it seemed to me that in talking of foxes Dr. Grantly was master of his subject. Thence the topic

glided to the duties of a bishop and to questions of preaching, as to which Dr. Grantly was not slow in offering his opinion. But I thought that I would rather have heard him talk about the foxes for a week together." She said nothing more to him, knowing well how useless it was to attempt to turn him by any argument. To her thinking the kindness of the archdeacon to them personally demanded some indulgence in the expression, and even in the formation, of an opinion, respecting his clerical peculiarities.

On the next day, however, Mr. Crawley, having been summoned by the archdeacon into the library for a little private conversation, found that he got on better with him. How the archdeacon conquered him may perhaps be best described by a further narration of what Mr. Crawley said to his wife. "I told him that in regard to money matters, as he called them, I had nothing to say. I only trusted that his son was aware that my daughter had no money, and never would have any. 'My dear Crawley,' the archdeacon said,—for of late there seems to have grown up in the world a habit of greater familiarity than that which I think did prevail when last I moved much among men; —'my dear Crawley, I have enough for both.' 'I would we stood on more equal grounds,' I said. Then as he answered me, he rose from his chair. 'We stand,' said he, 'on the only perfect level on which such men can meet each other. We are both gentlemen.' 'Sir,' I said, rising also, 'from the bottom of my heart I agree with you. I could not have spoken such words; but coming from you who are rich to me who am poor, they are honourable to the one and comfortable to the other.'"

"And after that?"

"He took down from the shelves a volume of sermons which his father published many years ago, and presented it to me. I have it now under my arm. It hath the old bishop's manuscript notes, which I will study carefully." And thus the archdeacon had hit his bird on both wings.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

It now only remains for me to gather together a few loose strings, and tie them together in a knot, so that my work may not become untwisted. Early in July, Henry Grantly and Grace Crawley were married in the parish church of Plumstead,—a great impropriety, as to which neither Archdeacon Grantly nor Mr. Crawley could be got to assent for a long time, but which was at last carried, not simply by a union of Mrs. Grantly and Mrs. Crawley, nor even by the assistance of Mrs. Arabin, but by the strong intervention of old Lady Lufton herself. "Of course Miss Crawley ought to be married from St. Ewold's vicarage; but when the furniture has only half been got in, how is it possible?" When Lady Lufton thus spoke, the archdeacon gave way, and Mr. Crawley had n't a leg to stand upon. Henry Grantly had not an opinion upon the matter. He told his father that he expected that they would marry him among them, and that that would be enough for him. As for Grace, nobody even thought of asking her; and I doubt whether she would have heard anything about the contest, had not some tidings of it reached her from her lover. Married they were at Plumstead,—and the breakfast was given with all that luxuriance of plenty which was so dear to the

archdeacon's mind. Mr. Crawley was the officiating priest. With his hands dropping before him, folded humbly, he told the archdeacon,—when that Plumstead question had been finally settled in opposition to his wishes,—that he would fain himself perform the ceremony by which his dearest daughter would be bound to her marriage duties. "And who else should?" said the archdeacon. Mr. Crawley muttered that he had not known how far his reverend brother might have been willing to waive his rights. But the archdeacon, who was in high good humour,—having just bestowed a little pony-carriage on his new daughter-in-law,—only laughed at him; and, if the rumour which was handed about the families be true, the archdeacon, before the interview was over, had poked Mr. Crawley in the ribs. Mr. Crawley married them; but the archdeacon assisted,—and the dean gave away the bride. The Rev. Charles Grantly was there also; and as there was, as a matter of course, a cloud of curates floating in the distance, Henry Grantly was perhaps to be excused for declaring to his wife, when the pair had escaped, that surely no couple had ever been so tightly buckled since marriage had first become a church ceremony.

Soon after that, Mr. and Mrs. Crawley became quiet at St. Ewold's, and, as I think, contented. Her happiness began very quickly. Though she had been greatly broken by her troubles, the first sight she had of her husband in his new long frock-coat went far to restore her, and while he was declaring himself to be a cock so daubed with mud as to be incapable of crowing, she was congratulating herself on seeing her husband once more clothed as became his position. And they were lucky, too, as regarded the squire's house;

for Mr. Thorne was old, and quiet, and old-fashioned; and Miss Thorne was older, and though she was not exactly quiet, she was very old-fashioned indeed. So that there grew to be a pleasant friendship between Miss Thorne and Mrs. Crawley.

Johnny Eames, when last I heard of him, was still a bachelor, and, as I think, likely to remain so. At last he had utterly thrown over Sir Raffle Buffle, declaring to his friends that the special duties of private secretaryship were not exactly to his taste. "You get so sick at the thirteenth private note," he said, "that you find yourself unable to carry on the humbug any farther." But he did not leave his office. "I 'm the head of a room, you know," he told Lady Julia De Guest; "and there 's nothing to trouble me,—and a fellow, you know, ought to have something to do." Lady Julia told him, with a great deal of energy, that she would never forgive him if he gave up his office. After that eventful night when he escaped ignominiously from the house of Lady Demolines under the protection of the policeman's lantern, he did hear more than once from Porchester Terrace, and from allies employed by the enemy who was there resident. "My cousin, the serjeant," proved to be a myth. Johnny found out all about that Serjeant Runter, who was distantly connected, indeed, with the late husband of Lady Demolines, but had always persistently declined to have any intercourse whatever with her ladyship. For the serjeant was a rising man, and Lady Demolines was not exactly progressing in the world. Johnny heard nothing from the serjeant; but from Madalina he got letter after letter. In the first she asked him

not to think too much of the little joke that had occurred. In her second she described the vehemence of her love. In her third the bitterness of her wrath. In her fourth she simply invited him to come and dine in Porchester Terrace. Her fifth was the outpouring of injured innocence. And then came letters from an attorney. Johnny answered not a word to any of them, and gradually the letters were discontinued. Within six months of the receipt of the last, he was delighted by reading among the marriages in the newspapers a notice that Peter Bangles, Esq., of the firm of Burton and Bangles, wine-merchants, of Hook Court, had been united to Madalina, daughter of the late Sir Confucius Demolines, at the church of Peter the Martyr. "Most appropriate," said Johnny, as he read the notice to Conway Dalrymple, who was then back from his wedding-tour; "for most assuredly there will be now another Peter the Martyr."

"I 'm not so sure of that," said Conway, who had heard something of Mr. Peter Bangles. "There are men who have strong wills of their own, and strong hands of their own."

"Poor Madalina!" said Johnny. "If he does beat her, I hope he will do it tenderly. It may be that a little of it will suit her fevered temperament."

Before the summer was over Conway Dalrymple had been married to Clara Van Siever, and by a singular arrangement of circumstances had married her with the full approval of old Mrs. Van. Mr. Musselboro, —whose name I hope has not been altogether forgotten, though the part played by him has been subordinate,—had opposed Dalrymple in the efforts made by the artist to get something out of Broughton's estate

for the benefit of the widow. From circumstances of which Dalrymple learned the particulars with the aid of an attorney, it seemed to him that certain facts were wilfully kept in the dark by Musselboro, and he went with his complaint to Mrs. Van Siever, declaring that he would bring the whole affair into court, unless all the workings of the firm were made clear to him. Mrs. Van was very insolent to him,—and even turned him out of the house. But, nevertheless, she did not allow Mr. Musselboro to escape. Whoever was to be left in the dark she did not wish to be there herself; —and it began to dawn upon her that her dear Musselboro was deceiving her. Then she sent for Dalrymple, and without a word of apology for her former conduct, put him upon the right track. As he was pushing his inquiries, and working heaven and earth for the unfortunate widow,—as to whom he swore daily that when this matter was settled he would never see her again, so terrible was she to him with her mock affection, and pretended hysterics, and false moralities, —he was told one day that she had gone off with Mr. Musselboro! Mr. Musselboro, finding that this was the surest plan of obtaining for himself the little business in Hook Court, married the widow of his late partner, and is at this moment probably carrying on a lawsuit with Mrs. Van. For the lawsuit Conway Dalrymple cared nothing. When the quarrel had become hot between Mrs. Van and her late myrmidon, Clara fell into Conway's hands without opposition; and, let the lawsuit go as it may, there will be enough left of Mrs. Van's money to make the house of Mr. and Mrs. Conway Dalrymple very comfortable. The picture of Jael and Sisera was stitched up without any

difficulty, and I dare say most of my readers will remember it hanging on the walls of the exhibition.

Before I take my leave of the diocese of Barchester for ever, which I purpose to do in the succeeding paragraph, I desire to be allowed to say one word of apology for myself, in answer to those who have accused me,—always without bitterness, and generally with tenderness,—of having forgotten, in writing of clergymen, the first and most prominent characteristic of the ordinary English clergyman's life. I have described many clergymen, they say, but have spoken of them all as though their professional duties, their high calling, their daily workings for the good of those around them, were matters of no moment, either to me, or, in my opinion, to themselves. I would plead, in answer to this, that my object has been to paint the social and not the professional lives of clergymen; and that I have been led to do so, firstly, by a feeling that as no men affect more strongly, by their own character, the society of those around than do country clergymen, so, therefore, their social habits have been worth the labour necessary for painting them; and secondly, by a feeling that though I, as a novelist, may feel myself entitled to write of clergymen out of their pulpits, as I may also write of lawyers and doctors, I have no such liberty to write of them in their pulpits. When I have done so, if I have done so, I have so far transgressed. There are those who have told me that I have made all my clergymen bad, and none good. I must venture to hint to such judges that they have taught their eyes to love a colouring higher than nature justifies. We are, most of us, apt to love Raphael's madonnas

better than Rembrandt's matrons. But, though we do so, we know that Rembrandt's matrons existed; but we have a strong belief that no such woman as Raphael painted ever did exist. In that he painted, as he may be surmised to have done, for pious purposes,—at least for church purposes,—Raphael was justified; but had he painted so for family portraiture he would have been false. Had I written an epic about clergymen, I would have taken St. Paul for my model; but describing, as I have endeavoured to do, such clergymen as I see around me, I could not venture to be transcendental. For myself, I can only say that I shall always be happy to sit, when allowed to do so, at the table of Archdeacon Grantly, to walk through the High Street of Barchester arm-in-arm with Mr. Robarts of Framley, and to stand alone and shed a tear beneath the modest black stone in the north transept of the cathedral on which is inscribed the name of Septimus Harding.

And now, if the reader will allow me to seize him affectionately by the arm, we will together take our last farewell of Barset and of the towers of Barchester. I may not venture to say to him that, in this county, he and I together have wandered often through the country lanes, and have ridden together over the too-well wooded fields, or have stood together in the cathedral nave listening to the peals of the organ, or have together sat at good men's tables, or have confronted together the angry pride of men who were not good. I may not boast that any beside myself have so realised the place, and the people, and the facts, as to make such reminiscences possible as those which I should attempt to evoke by an appeal to perfect fellowship. But to me Barset has been a real county, and its city

a real city, and the spires and towers have been before my eyes, and the voices of the people are known to my ears, and the pavement of the city ways are familiar to my footsteps. To them all I now say farewell. That I have been induced to wander among them too long by my love of old friendships, and by the sweetness of old faces, is a fault for which I may perhaps be more readily forgiven, when I repeat, with some solemnity of assurance, the promise made in my title, that this shall be the last chronicle of Barset.

THE END.